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**Arkansas Department of Education  
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**SUBMITTED BY**

**Metis Associates**

# **Arkansas Public Charter Schools: Evaluation of Service Impact and Student Achievement**

## **2008–2009 Evaluation Report**



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# Arkansas Public Charter Schools: Evaluation of Service Impact and Student Achievement

2008–2009 Evaluation Report

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## **I. Introduction**

Arkansas, like other states across the country, joined the public charter school movement in an effort to increase school choice and improve educational quality. The passage of Arkansas' first public charter school legislation occurred in 1995 and was viewed as one of the most stringent public charter school laws in the country. The legislation was revised in 1999, which allowed the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) to approve the establishment of four public charter schools that opened in the fall of 2001. Since then, a number of open enrollment and conversion schools have been chartered in the state. Conversion schools are public schools that have been converted to public charter schools and can only admit students within their own school districts. Open enrollment schools are completely new schools that have been chartered by the state and are allowed to draw and admit students from across the state.

As specified by Arkansas Law, public charter schools are accountable to the State Board of Education to yield gains in student achievement and adhere to the charter authorization. At the same time, the public charter schools are afforded increased autonomy, which is realized through requests for exemptions from Title 6 of the Arkansas Education Code and State Board of Education rules. The public charter schools are held responsible for educational results and fiscal practices to several groups, including the entity that grants them, the parents who choose them, and the public that funds them.

At the end of the 2008–2009 school year, 26 public charter schools were in operation in Arkansas (17 open enrollment and nine conversion schools) and served approximately 7,000 students. Oversight of the public charter schools is provided by the ADE Public Charter School Office. Findings from the 2007–2008 technical report revealed parent and student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, school and class sizes, curricula, and opportunities for parental involvement. Achievement data analyses also indicated that characteristics such as higher attendance ratios, larger school size, the use of class-size reduction and multi-grade classrooms, use of team-teaching, and fewer suspensions were associated with improved student achievement.

As a continuation to findings reported in the 2007–2008 annual evaluation report, the ADE was interested in again learning about the characteristics of existing public charter schools that were having a positive effect on students. The ADE also aimed to develop additional benchmarks and parameters for program provision.

To continue to study the Arkansas Public Charter Schools Program, in September 2009 ADE asked Metis Associates to design and carry out an evaluation that would begin to address key areas of research identified by ADE to achieve the following:

- Contribute to the overall knowledge base about public charter schools, including their impact on student achievement;

- Obtain qualitative data on the program's impact from key stakeholders (administrators, students, and parents) across the 26 target schools and assess the stakeholders' satisfaction with all aspects of program implementation; and
- Begin to identify the innovations and practices that are being implemented within and across the 26 target public charter schools and what effect these might be having on student academic achievement.

The next two sections of this report describe the research methods used throughout the study and present the findings, which are organized by the three major research questions originally presented in the 2006–2007 proposal. The last section presents conclusions and recommendations for future implementation. The Appendices follow the main report and include outputs for student achievement data distributions (Appendices A), detailed evaluation survey results (Appendix B), and copies of the evaluation surveys (Appendix C).

## **II. Research Methods**

The Metis evaluation team worked closely with the Public Charter School Director, Dr. Mary Ann Duncan, over the course of the evaluation period and facilitated several progress meetings with ADE staff. The progress meetings, held between September 2009 and May 2010, served as a vehicle to finalize the evaluation research questions, discuss instrument development and other data sources, and share formative evaluation information with ADE. The team addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the overall efficacy of the public charter schools?
2. To what extent are the parents and the students of the public charter schools satisfied with their school?
3. What is the impact of the Arkansas public charter schools on student performance?
  - a. What are the characteristics of the public charter schools that are having the greatest impact on academic achievement?
  - b. What other indicators of improved school success are evident for public charter school students?
  - c. What can the public charter schools learn from disaggregating the student outcome data by different No Child Left Behind (NCLB) subgroups?

The Metis team used the following methods to collect data relevant to the research questions of the evaluation:

- Surveys of school administrators, parents, and students;
- Analysis of student achievement data and demographic information; and
- Review of extant data.

### ***Surveys of School Administrators, Parents, and Students***

Beginning in December 2009, the evaluation team asked site leaders at each of the public charter schools to complete an online Public Charter School Administrator Survey, assist in

disseminating a classroom-based student survey, and facilitate the administration of a parent survey. Twenty-five public charter schools completed the survey, which collected systematic information about public charter school operations.

The parent survey was sent home with each public charter school student, and included a cover letter, a parent consent form for student participation in the student survey, and a self-addressed, postage-paid survey return envelope. To ensure the greatest response rate possible, no sampling methods were used and all parents should have received a questionnaire. In total, 750 parent surveys were returned, which represented 24 public charter schools. The number of parent surveys returned from each school ranged from 3 to 99, with a median of 20.

Student surveys were given to students in Grades 3 and higher at all of the public charter schools. The surveys were completed in the target grade classrooms (homerooms or first-period classrooms for middle and high schools), and each set of class surveys was inserted into a peel-and-seal envelope to ensure anonymity. The instructions asked that teachers read the directions to students in their classrooms, have students insert their surveys into the large sealable envelope, and designate an individual to mail the completed surveys back to Metis using a pre-paid UPS label. In total, 4,006 student surveys were returned, accounting for 23 public charter schools. The number of student surveys returned from each school ranged from 26 to 823, with a median of 107.

Table 1 shows the sample size and response rates for all three surveys.

**Table 1**  
***Sample Size and Response Rates for School-Based Surveys***

Stakeholder Group	Target Population	Achieved Sample	Response Rate
Administrators/Principals	26	34 <sup>a</sup>	131%
Students	5,980	4,006	67%
Parents	5,980	750	13%

<sup>a</sup> Some schools also had their Assistant Principals or Superintendent complete the administrator survey.

### ***Analysis of Student Achievement Data and Demographic Information***

Student achievement data and demographic information were obtained from the ADE, and an analytic file was constructed. Demographic information included racial/ethnic background, poverty status, and special needs status. In addition, the file contained the results of the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAPP), which includes results for the Stanford Achievement Test 10 (SAT) in language and math (for Grades 2–3);<sup>1</sup> the Arkansas Benchmark exams in literacy and math (for Grades 4–8); and End-of-Course exams (EOC) in geometry, algebra, and literacy (for Grades 9–12).

<sup>1</sup> Pretest scores were not available for Grade 1 (i.e., no Kindergarten scores), so the Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA) could not be conducted for this grade. (Perhaps a brief description of ANCOVA is appropriate here)

### ***Review of Extant Data***

The evaluation team requested, collected, and reviewed relevant documentation on school-wide public charter school implementation. The sampling of information obtained from a total of four schools included:

- Fall 2008 Annual School Report to the Public (obtained from two schools);
- Arkansas Consolidated School Improvement Plans (ACSIP; obtained from four schools); and
- Other school-related documentation, including evidence of parental support/involvement, strong academic leadership, high academic standards, and professional training (obtained from four schools).

## **III. Findings**

This section of the report presents findings of the evaluation and is organized according to the major research questions.

### ***Overall Efficacy of Public Charter Schools***

#### ***School operations.***

Table 2 lists the 26 public charter schools in the 2008–2009 evaluation and includes information about the school type, school management, grades served, and year opened.

**Table 2**  
***Overview of the Arkansas Public Charter Schools (2008–2009 Evaluation)***

<b>Charter School</b>	<b>School Type</b>	<b>School Management</b>	<b>Grades Served</b>	<b>Year Opened</b>
Academic Center of Excellence	Conversion	School District	4–9	2002–2003
Badger Academy	Conversion	School District	7–12	2007–2008
Blytheville Charter School	Conversion	School District	7–12	2001–2002
Cabot Academic Center for Excellence	Conversion	School District	7–12	2004–2005
Felder Alternative Learning Academy	Conversion	School District	7–12	2005–2006
Mountain Home High School	Conversion	School District	9–12	2003–2004
Ridgeroad Middle School	Conversion	School District	3–8	2003–2004
Vilonia Academy of Technology <sup>a</sup>	Conversion	School District	2–4	2004–2005

Charter School	School Type	School Management	Grades Served	Year Opened
Vilonia Academy of Service & Technology	Conversion	School District	5–6	2007–2008
Academics Plus	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	3–8	2001–2002
Arkansas Virtual Academy	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	K–8	2004–2005
Benton County School of the Arts	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	K–8	2001–2002
Benton County School of the Arts High School (Currently: Northwest Arkansas Academy of Fine Arts)	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	9–12	2001–2002
Covenant Keepers College Preparatory	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	6–8	2008–2009
Dreamland Academy of Performing & Communication Arts	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	K–5	2007–2008
e-STEM Elementary School	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	K–4	2008–2009
e-STEM Middle School	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	5–8	2008–2009
e-STEM High School	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	9	2008–2009
Haas Hall Academy	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	10–12	2004–2005
HOPE Academy	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	5–8	2007–2008
Imboden Area Charter School	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	K–8	2002–2003
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	5–9	2002–2003
LISA Academy	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	9–10	2004–2005
LISA Academy – North Little Rock	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	K–8	2008–2009
Osceola Communication, Arts, and Business School	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	K–12	2008–2009
School of Excellence	Open Enrollment	Nonprofit Organization	6–9	2008–2009

<sup>a</sup> Vilonia Academy of Technology serves Grades K–4, but only Grades 2–4 were part of the public charter school in 2008–2009.

Among the 26 public charter schools participating in the evaluation, the grade configurations varied considerably, including elementary school grades only (three schools), elementary through middle school grades (nine schools), middle school to high school grades (five schools), middle school grades only (one school), high school grades only (five schools), and all three schooling levels (three schools). Table 2 also shows that nine of these schools were conversion schools and 17 were open enrollment schools. Four schools (Blytheville, Academics Plus, Benton K–8, and Benton High) were the first to open during the 2001–2002 school year, and seven schools (Covenant Keepers; e-STEM Elementary, Middle, and High Schools; LISA Academy at North Little Rock; Osceola Communication, Arts, and Business School; and the School of Excellence) were the latest to open in the 2008–2009 year.

In 2008–2009, the public charter schools put into practice various waivers from the state and district education laws, regulations, and policies. These data were received from administrators



from 25 public charter schools during the evaluation and were analyzed to determine what waivers were utilized by the public charter schools. Table 3 shows the most common areas in which the schools obtained and implemented waivers.

**Table 3**  
***Public Charter School Waivers***

Waiver	Number	Percent <sup>a</sup>
Teacher certification requirements	18	72.0
Collective bargaining provisions	1	4.0
Establishing curriculum	9	36.0
Teacher hiring, discipline, and dismissal practices	1	4.0
Student discipline policies	1	0
Resource allocations	0	0
School calendar	13	52.0
School year length	2	8.0
School day length	12	48.0
Other	1	4.0

<sup>a</sup>Total percentage for each group does not equal 100 percent because respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

As shown in Table 3, teacher certification requirements were the most common waivers that were put into place by the public charter schools in 2008–2009, similar to 2007–2008. However, in contrast, 57 percent of schools submitted a waiver for teacher hiring, discipline, and dismissal practices in 2007–2008, but only 4 percent (one school) did so in 2008–2009.

Open enrollment schools were asked to indicate the most common practices carried out by their school board during the 2008–2009 year. Of the 17 participating open enrollment schools, it was learned that their public charter school boards most frequently implemented the following practices:

- Formal plan for family and community involvement,
- Identification of a board director,
- Open lines of communication,
- Open board meetings,
- Sharing of agendas and other important information before board meetings, and
- Written description of board members' roles and responsibilities.

A review of program documentation collected from open enrollment schools did not demonstrate transparency in boards' activities, roles and responsibilities, or communication with the school community. Despite this, for the second consecutive year, at least 85 percent of administrator survey respondents indicated that formal processes for developing school policy and having

clear, up-to-date by-laws were regular board practices in 2008–2009. This is also an increase over the 50% who reported having these practices 2 years ago during the 2006–2007 school year.

### *Staff-related practices.*

In 2008–2009, the difference in the average number of paid full-time staff in conversion vs. open enrollment schools was the same (30 vs. 19, respectively), which is expected because conversion schools have larger student populations than the open enrollment schools. Across both types of schools, the racial/ethnic background of the staff was approximately 80 percent white, 19 percent African American (up three percentage points from 2007–2008), and 2 percent Hispanic or Latino.

Public charter school law often allows schools to implement staff practices that would not be possible under a traditional school structure, and results of the online administrator survey indicated that this was true within the Arkansas public charter schools. The data in Table 4 show that dismissing teachers for poor performance (15 schools) was the practice used most frequently among all schools, followed by the practice of ongoing targeted professional development (10 schools), performance-based bonuses (seven schools), and rewards for teachers with exemplary performance (six schools). As in 2007–2008, there were some notable differences regarding the staffing practices used at both conversion and open enrollment schools, with the open enrollment schools generally reporting more innovative staff-related practices than the conversion schools. For example, seven open enrollment public charter schools offered performance-based bonuses for teachers, but this was not offered by any of the conversion schools. Interestingly, all responding open enrollment schools practiced the dismissal of teachers for unsatisfactory performance, compared to only one conversion schools.

**Table 4**  
***Public Charter School Alternative Staff Practices***

Area	Number of Schools	Percent <sup>a</sup>
Higher teacher salaries	2	8.7
Private fundraising/grants development	2	8.7
Lack of tenure of teachers	4	17.4
Performance-based bonuses for teachers	7	30.4
Ongoing, targeted professional development	10	43.5
Rewards for teachers for exemplary performance	6	26.1
Dismissal of teachers for unsatisfactory performance	15	65.2
Contract for professional development services with non-district providers	5	21.7

<sup>a</sup> The total percentage does not equal 100 percent because respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses.

The survey findings revealed that public charter schools offered approximately one less dedicated day of professional development in 2008–2009 than in 2007–2008 (8.9 days vs. 10.0 days, respectively). In 2008–2009, conversion and open enrollment schools offered 7.9 and 9.6 days of professional development, respectively, compared to 10.8 and 11.2, respectively, in the previous year. All public charter schools offered fewer professional development days overall,

but the gap in the number of dedicated professional development days provided by open enrollment and conversion schools widened in 2008–2009. This is not inclusive of other professional development opportunities provided throughout the school year. A review of program documentation provided information on the content of the professional development that the public charter schools offered during the 2008–2009 year, such as training related to the alignment of instruction, addressing the needs of special education and English Language Learner (ELL) students, student data reviews, using SmartBoards, incorporating technology (e.g., digital story telling, Texas Instruments Navigator), instructional differentiation, integrating curriculum into physical education, core academic subjects (including addressing needs of low-performing students), and raising student achievement.

### ***Parent involvement.***

There are many reasons why parents choose to enroll their children in a public charter school instead of a traditional school. This study aimed to investigate the main reasons why Arkansas parents were choosing to send their children to a public charter school, with the expectation that these findings could have implications on the practices of traditional district schools in the state. Findings from these survey items, which were asked of parents and administrations, are presented in Table 5, below.

**Table 5**  
***Main Reasons Why Parents Choose Public Charter Schools***

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Parent Survey* (N = 750)</b>	<b>Administrator Survey (N = 23)</b>
Interest in the public charter school's education mission or philosophy	427 (56.9%)	16 (69.6%)
Child was doing poorly in previous school	113 (15.1%)	16 (69.6%)
Dissatisfaction with traditional public school options and/or safety	374 (49.9%)	16 (69.6%)
Interest in public charter school's instructional or academic program	488 (65.1%)	17 (73.9%)
More convenient location than previous school	104 (13.9%)	5 (21.7%)
Child has special needs that previous school was not addressing	78 (10.4%)	10 (43.5%)
Better teachers at this public charter school	233 (31.1%)	10 (43.5%)
My child wanted to come to this public charter school	168 (22.4%)	11 (47.8%)
This public charter school offers extended day hours/before- and after-school program	137 (18.3%)	11 (47.8%)
Small size of this public charter school or small classes	311 (41.5%)	16 (69.6%)
Greater opportunities for parental involvement at this public charter school	182 (24.3%)	7 (30.4%)
It is the only school available for my child to attend/NA	50 (6.7%)	1 (4.3%)
Other primary reasons	125 (16.7%)	16 (69.6%)

\*This calculation removed the 45 conversion parents who reported the school as the only available option for their child.

According to data reported in Table 5, across the public charter schools, more than half of the parent respondents believed that parents were choosing to enroll their children in a public charter school for the following reasons:

- Interest in the public charter school's instructional program, and
- Interest in the public charter school's education mission and philosophy.

Table 5 also shows that public charter school administrators were much more likely (two thirds or more) than the parents themselves to believe that parents took into account the following factors when choosing a public charter school:

- Interest in the public charter school's instructional program,
- Dissatisfaction with traditional public school options and/or safety
- Child was doing poorly in previous school,
- Interest in the public charter school's education mission and philosophy, and
- Small size of the school or classes.

The survey also asked about the parental/community involvement of public charter school parents. As such, administrators were asked to rate the level of parental/community involvement in various aspects of public charter school implementation, using ratings of *excellent*, *good*, *average*, and *poor/unsatisfactory*. The results revealed that:

- Most administrators rated parental involvement as *good* or *excellent* concerning academic, attendance, behavior, and school-wide activities (approximately 81%).
- When asked about community involvement, 58 percent of survey respondents gave a rating of *good* or *excellent* and 42% gave a rating of *poor* or *average*.

The evaluation showed that the public charter schools put forth a concerted effort to improve parent involvement. In each of the past 2 years (2007-2008 and 2008–2009, at least 81 to 93 percent of schools implemented parent-teacher conferences, held school events during times that accommodated parents' schedules, involved parents in monitoring students' academic progress, and involved parents in discipline-related discussions. However, in 2008–2009, there were notable increases (at least 18 percentage points) in the percentage of schools implementing the following strategies for involving parents:

- Parent involvement contracts (+34 percentage points),
- Establishing parent and community advisory committees (+21),
- Using community resources (e.g., museums, parks) to enhance student learning (+19), and
- Creating learning partnerships with community-based organizations (+18).

Approximately two thirds of schools also used parents and community volunteers to provide special instruction, a slight increase from the previous year.

When compared by school type, a similar percentage of open enrollment and conversion schools used the various parent involvement strategies listed on Table 78 of Appendix B, with two exceptions. Open enrollment schools were much more likely than conversion schools to have used community resources to enhance student learning (73% vs. 45%, respectively), but conversion schools were notably more likely than open enrollment schools to have hired a parent involvement coordinator or community liaison (64% vs. 33%, respectively).

A review of the program documentation provided some additional examples of strategies used by the schools to promote parent involvement and communication, including development of informational packets, monthly parent newsletters, hiring of parent facilitators, regular invitations to alumni/parent committee meetings, trainings or workshops, annual parent feedback surveys, and other school functions. The majority of the schools provided samples of parent newsletters that were regularly distributed throughout the school year. All schools that provided copies of their 2008–2009 school improvement plan (ACSIP) indicated the implementation of parent orientation events and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings.

In contrast to the previous year, a higher percentage of conversion schools required parents to sign parent involvement contracts in 2008–2009 (55% in 2008–2009 vs. 22% the previous year). This brought conversion schools closer to the 60 percent implementation of this strategy by open enrollment schools in 2008–2009. Finally, there seemed to be a push at open enrollment schools to increase parent involvement; 80 percent of open enrollment schools in 2008–2009 required parents to attend parents meetings, compared to 58 percent the previous year.

### ***Instruction.***

Administrator survey respondents indicated the use of various methods of instructional delivery in 2008–2009. The highest reported method of instructional delivery was cooperative learning, as indicated by 92 percent of schools, which is an increase over the 67 percent of public charter schools that used this method during the previous school year. The only instructional methods that were implemented substantially higher in one type of school over the other (in this case, open enrollment schools over conversion schools, with a difference of more than 40 percentage points) were foreign language immersion, character education, and interdisciplinary instruction. Two years ago (2006–2007), no school implemented foreign language immersion, and by 2008–2009 27 percent of the public charter schools offered these programs. Other methods of instructional delivery reported by at least three quarters of the schools included project-based learning, integration of technology, and cooperative learning. Conversely, multi-grade classrooms, integration of fine arts, independent student study, year-round schooling, and work and field-based learning were implemented by less than one third of schools.

When asked about special education instruction, 74 percent of schools reported providing some type of accommodation for students with special needs (down from 89% the previous year). Close to three quarters (73%) of public charter schools indicated the use of pull-out services for students with special needs, which was the most common accommodation reported. In addition, approximately 62 percent of these public charter schools contained inclusive classrooms (down from 80% the previous year), and less than half (42%) of the schools indicated having self-

contained special education classes. In terms of instruction for ELL students, 54 percent schools indicated having English as a second language instruction (similar to the previous year).

All of the public charter schools appeared to use a range of assessment strategies in addition to adhering to the state and national assessments required of all Arkansas public schools. The majority of the schools reported using student portfolios (50%), behavioral indicators (65%), and student demonstrations/exhibitions (81%) in addition to teacher-assigned grades and the required standardized achievement test and benchmark exam. Analysis of the data by type of school did not reveal any notable differences.

### ***Issues and challenges.***

Public charter school administrators were asked about what issues and challenges (if any) they encountered in operating their public charter school during the 2008–2009 year. Overall, managing facility costs was the only area that administrators found particularly more challenging in 2008–2009 than in 2007–2008 (52% vs. 27% of schools, respectively). However, when disaggregated by type of school, the challenge seemed to be much more prevalent for open enrollment schools than conversion schools. Similar to previous evaluations, 73 percent of open enrollment schools faced facility costs challenges in 2008–2009 compared to 13 percent of conversion schools, a percentage that is 23 percentage points higher than open enrollment schools from the previous year. It also seemed that managing public perceptions was particularly challenging this year for conversion schools, as indicated by 50 percent of schools compared to none the previous year.

## ***Satisfaction of Parents and Students with Their Public Charter School***

### ***Parent satisfaction.***

Overall, data from the parent survey suggest that parental satisfaction with the Arkansas public charter schools for the 2008–2009 year was high at both conversion and open-enrollment schools. Specific to open-enrollment schools, almost all of the responding parents (94%) rated their child's current school as *good* to *excellent*, compared with fewer than two-thirds (65%) who provided the same rating for the child's previous school, which is a difference of 29 percentage points. Looking at these data by school type revealed that respondent-parents whose children attended open enrollment schools were more likely to have been dissatisfied with their child's previous school and slightly more likely to be satisfied with the public charter school in which their child was enrolled in the 2008–2009 school year (see Table 6, below).

**Table 6**  
***Satisfaction with Current and Previous School***

School Type		Total	Excellent/Good	Fair/Poor
Conversion	Satisfaction with previous school	138	77%	24%
	Satisfaction with current school	141	90%	10%
Open Enrollment	Satisfaction with previous school	583	65%	37%
	Satisfaction with current school	591	94%	5%

Parents were also asked to provide a rating of *better*, *about the same*, or *worse* when asked to compare their child's current school to their previous school on various areas of instruction. These data are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7**  
***Parents' Perception of Instructional Quality***

Area of Instruction	Total	Better	About the Same	Worse
Quality of school's reading instruction	718	72%	23%	5%
Quality of school's math instruction	720	77%	19%	4%
Quality of school's writing instruction	721	73%	23%	4%

According to findings shown in Table 7, parents were considerably more positive about their child's current public charter school than they were about their previous school. Approximately three quarters of parents believed that the quality of the math, reading, and writing instruction at their child's current school was better than at their child's prior school. In contrast, few parents (less than 5%) felt that their child's current school was *worse* than their previous school.

Parents were also asked to provide their opinions of various components present in their child's public charter school, using the following scale: *very satisfied*, *somewhat satisfied*, *somewhat dissatisfied*, and *dissatisfied* (Table 8). Overall, the data indicate that public charter school parents were generally satisfied with instructional practices, communication, school/class size, and school climate. The data in Table 8 show that:

- The great majority of parents (at least 90%) indicated that they were either *very* or *somewhat satisfied* with curriculum, their opportunities to be involved and participate, and school size.
- No component had less than 65 percent parent satisfaction, and 11 out of 14 components had at least 80 percent parent satisfaction. For those 11 components, more than half of parents responding said that they were *very satisfied*.
- Parents reported their lowest satisfaction with the quality of school facilities (e.g., library, gym), extracurricular activities, and the quality of the building in which the school is located.

**Table 8*****Parents' Satisfaction with Specific Components of the Public Charter School***

Component	Total	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Not sure
Curriculum	736	93%	3%	4%
Performance of the teachers	734	90%	7%	3%
Class size	740	89%	5%	6%
Individualized attention your child gets	738	88%	8%	4%
Opportunities for parents to be involved or participate	739	91%	6%	4%
Communication with your child's teacher	741	89%	7%	3%
Quality of the building in which the school is located	743	75%	11%	14%
Quality of the school facilities, such as the gym, library, and labs	737	65%	17%	18%
Use of technology within the instructional program	743	89%	6%	5%
School discipline policies and practices	742	84%	8%	8%
Quality of student support services, such as guidance counseling and tutoring	743	83%	8%	10%
Extracurricular activities	736	71%	16%	12%
School size	742	90%	3%	6%
School climate	738	86%	6%	8%

Two other areas of public charter school implementation—school safety and school facilities—were assessed using ratings provided by surveyed parents. The results are provided in Table 9, below.

**Table 9*****Parents' Perception of School Safety and Facilities***

School Area	Total	Better	About the Same	Worse
School safety	724	69%	27%	4%
School facilities	724	64%	24%	12%

Data presented in Table 9 indicate that parents believed that safety was about the same or better at the public charter school than at their child's previous school (96%). On the subject of facilities, only 12% of parents who responded to the survey indicated that the public charter school their child attends had worse facilities, but a closer look at the data showed that among the seven schools from which at least 20 parent surveys were received, one in particular had many parents who found the facilities of the school comparatively lacking: Academics Plus with 27 of 48 parents.

Finally, when parents were asked in an open-ended question what they believed were the most positive aspects of their child's public charter school, they most frequently mentioned the following (about 580 parents responded to this question):

- Dedication of teachers and other school staff,
- Strong and engaging curriculum,



- Small school size and class size that results in a flexible program with personalized attention for students and parents,
- Opportunity and desire for parental involvement in the school and in their children's education, and
- Positive student outcomes in academics or behavior.

When asked in an open-ended question what issues were of most concern regarding the public charter school, 537 parents responded and approximately one in five said that they had no concerns. Among parents' greatest concerns about their child's public charter school were the following:

- Problems with school facilities, in particular the small size of the facilities and the lack of gyms, cafeterias, and computers;
- The breadth of instructional offerings;
- Too few extracurricular activities;
- Too many inexperienced teachers;
- Poor communication about student progress and school events and difficulty in reaching teachers and/or school administrators about questions;
- The school ends after 8th grade; and
- Problems with discipline and unruly students.

### *Student satisfaction.*

Students were asked various questions about different elements that contribute to school success. Using a Likert-type scale that included *excellent*, *good*, *average*, and *poor*, students rated the overall quality of their current school and their previous school, as shown in Table 10.

**Table 10**  
*Students' Perceptions of Overall School Quality*

School	Total	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Current	2,977 <sup>2</sup>	32%	38%	20%	9%
Previous	2,146	26%	39%	35%	17%

Table 10 shows that, overall, more than two thirds of the students (70%) gave their current school a rating of *good* to *excellent*, compared with 65% who rated their previous school *good* or *excellent*. The students were split almost evenly between those who rated their current school *excellent* and those who rated their school *good*, with slightly more students selecting *good*. Among students who answered both questions, the higher percentage of respondents ranked their

<sup>2</sup> Only students that attended their current school in 2008–2009 were included in the analyses.

current school better than their previous school (44%), with the remaining students evenly split between giving both schools the same ranking and giving a higher ranking to their previous school (28% each).

Students were asked how they felt about the number of students in their classes. The findings indicate that most students (85%) were satisfied with the number of students in their classes. Finally, when asked if they wanted to return to the same school next year, of the 2,443 students who did not indicate that they were graduating, close to half (1,050) said that they definitely want to return. Still, about one in five students (546) said that they did not want to return to the same school, and about one in three students said that they *kind of* wanted to come back.

### ***Impact of the Arkansas Public Charter Schools on Student Achievement***

SAT-10 language and math data were used to analyze student achievement in Grades 2–3;<sup>3</sup> Benchmark literacy and math exam data were used to analyze student achievement in Grades 4–8; and EOC algebra 1, geometry, and 11th-grade literacy exam data were used to analyze student achievement in Grades 9–12.

The SAT-10 allows educators to monitor students' progress and help ensure that the state and/or national standards are met. For each grade (K–12), the SAT-10 test includes language, math, and reading sections.

The Benchmark literacy and math exams are Arkansas state-mandated criterion-referenced tests that have been customized around the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks. In Arkansas, the test items are based on the academic standards in the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks and are developed by committees of Arkansas teachers with support from the ADE and the testing contractor.<sup>4</sup>

The EOC algebra 1, geometry, and 11th-grade literacy exams were used to compare the performance of students in Grades 9–12 from spring 2008 to spring 2009. All three of these examinations are criterion-referenced tests with questions that have been aligned with the goals and subject-specific competencies described by the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks. As such, student performance on these exams is directly aligned with the statewide frameworks and statewide curriculum goals.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Characteristics of public charter schools having the greatest impact on academic achievement and other indicators of improved school success for public charter school students.***

Multiple regression analyses were used to examine the different factors that might influence student achievement. Multiple regression can be a useful tool when there is an interest in accounting for the variation in an outcome (i.e., dependent variable) based on combinations of different factors and conditions (i.e., independent variables). Multiple regression analysis can

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<sup>3</sup> There were no pretest scores available for students in Grade 1 this year.

<sup>4</sup> Information obtained from the ADE website: <http://arkedu.state.ar.us>

establish that a set of independent variables explains a proportion of the variation in a dependent variable at a significant level (significance test of  $R^2$ ) and can establish the relative predictive importance of the individual independent variables (comparing beta weights).

Regressions were conducted to predict 2009 student achievement scores from several programmatic and demographic variables, measures of satisfaction, 2008 achievement scores (when available), and attendance. Several models were constructed using a range of variables to maximize the number of observed cases and the number of input variables. The list below shows the starting set of variables for all of the models.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • School size  | • Use of team teaching                   |
| • School attendance ratio                              | • Use of multi-grade classrooms          |
| • Number of suspensions                                | • Use of theme-based instruction         |
| • Spring 2008 test scores (SAT-10 and Benchmark exams) | • Presence of extended school day        |
| • Student satisfaction total <sup>5</sup>              | • Implemented reduced/small class size   |
|  | • Parent satisfaction total <sup>5</sup> |

Based on initial  $R^2$  values and the corresponding significance tests conducted, most of the above listed variables were retained. Only school size did not significantly predict spring 2009 outcomes and was therefore removed from the analyses. The list below shows the final variable set used for all regressions presented herein.

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| • School attendance ratio           | • Use of team teaching                 |
| • Number of suspensions             | • Use of multi-grade classrooms        |
| • Spring 2008 SAT-10 scores         | • Use of theme-based instruction       |
| • Spring 2008 Benchmark exam scores | • Presence of extended school day      |
| • Student satisfaction total        | • Implemented reduced/small class size |
| • Parent satisfaction total         |  |

The following tables summarize the resulting regression models. Presented in each table are the amount of variation that is explained by the independent variables (i.e., the  $R^2$  value) and the set of variables that appears to contribute significantly and substantially to that variation. The tables also include the Beta weight (SC Beta) from which each variable's direction of association (i.e., positive or negative) with the outcome can be discerned.

Table 11 presents the resulting regression models predicting 2009 SAT-10 language and math scores for Grades 2–3.<sup>3</sup> Both final models retained the pretest (i.e., 2008) achievement as a significantly positive predictor for the outcomes. Compared to last year's results, more programmatic variables were included in the final regression models for the lower elementary grades this year. The model for SAT-10 language indicated that use of multi-grade classrooms was positively associated with student language achievement. The model for SAT-10 math indicated that use of theme-based curriculum served as a significantly positive predictor of student math outcome. Notably, the parent satisfaction total, which did not show up in any of last

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<sup>5</sup> Student and parent satisfaction were derived by summing ratings across various items in each survey, creating an overall level of school satisfaction.

year's final models, was detected as a significantly positive predictor of student math achievement in Grades 2–3 this year.

**Table 11**

*Stepwise Regression Results for the Final Model Predicting Spring 2009 SAT-10 Language and Math NCE Scores (Grades 2–3)*

Test	Independent Variables Included in Final Model	SC Beta	Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> )
SAT-10 language <i>N</i> = 208 <i>F</i> = 79.528	SAT-10 spring 2008 language NCE score	.646	.437*
	Use of multigrade classrooms	.111	
SAT-10 math <i>N</i> = 208 <i>F</i> = 74.547	SAT-10 spring 2008 math NCE score	.744	.523*
	Parental satisfaction total	.134	
	Use of theme-based curriculum	.110	

\*  $p < .05$ .

**Table 12**

*Stepwise Regression Results for the Final Model Predicting Spring 2009 Benchmark Literacy and Math Scale Scores (Grades 4–8)*

Test	Independent Variables Included in Final Model	SC Beta	Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> )
Benchmark literacy <i>N</i> = 2,130 <i>F</i> = 410.665	Benchmark spring 2008 literacy score	.724	.635*
	Number of suspensions	–.047	
	School attendance ratio for 2008–2009	.048	
	Implemented reduced/small class size	.043	
	Student satisfaction total	.047	
Benchmark math <i>N</i> = 2,130 <i>F</i> = 643.732	Benchmark spring 2008 math score	.803	.732*
	Presence of extended school day	–.038	
	School attendance ratio for 2008–2009	.036	
	Student satisfaction total	.044	
	Implemented reduced/small class size	.030	

\*  $p < .05$ .

Table 12 presents the resultant regression models predicting 2009 Benchmark literacy and math scores for students in Grades 4–8. In addition to pretest performance, the two models apparently included more demographic and programmatic variables than the SAT-10 models.

As shown in Table 12, higher literacy achievement in Grades 4–8 was associated with the following:

- Higher pretest performance,

- Fewer suspensions,
- Higher school attendance ratio,
- Implementing class size reduction initiatives, and
- Higher student satisfaction total.

As for Benchmark math, higher achievement at these same grade levels was associated with the following:

- Higher pretest performance,
- No extended school day,
- Higher school attendance ratio,
- Higher student satisfaction total, and
- Implementing class size reduction initiatives.

The positive association of pretest performance and school attendance to achievement was expected. The model for Benchmark math indicated that the presence of extended school day was negatively associated with student achievement in math. Further examination of the data showed that students in the schools that did not implement extended school day performed significantly better on the 2008 Benchmark math test than those in the schools with an extended school day. However, lower prior achievement might be the reason why those schools chose to have an extended school day and relates to the schools' lower overall math performance. The model for Benchmark literacy also indicated that number of suspensions was negatively associated with student literacy achievement, which was not surprising.

Note that the student satisfaction total, which was not retained in any of the final models last year, was found to be a significantly positive predictor in both Benchmark literacy and math final models this year. Also different from last year, both of these final models indicated positive association of achievement to implementing class-size reduction initiatives this year.

**Table 13**  
***Stepwise Regression Results for the Final Model Predicting Spring 2009 EOC Exam Scores (Grades 9–12)***

Test <sup>a</sup>	Independent Variables Included in Final Model	SC Beta	Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> )
EOC algebra 1 N = 340 F = 26.642	Use of team teaching	.312	.241*
	Parent satisfaction total	.511	
	Use of theme-based curriculum	.603	
	Number of suspensions	-.112	

<sup>a</sup> Geometry and literacy EOC exams are not presented because each showed a low explainable variance (below .150).

\*  $p < .05$ .

Table 13 presents the final regression model predicting 2009 EOC algebra 1 for Grades 9–12. Geometry and literacy EOC exams are not presented because each showed a low explainable variance (below .150). Note that because EOC exams are taken only once, pretest scores were unavailable to include in high school models. The model found that higher achievement in EOC algebra 1 in Grades 9–12 was associated with the following:

- Using team-teaching techniques,
- Higher parent satisfaction total,
- Using theme-based curriculum, and
- *Fewer* suspensions.

For high school students, it seemed that use of team-teaching techniques and theme-based curriculum were positively associated with the EOC algebra 1 score this year, whereas the other three programmatic variables (i.e., class size reduction, multi-grade classrooms, and extended school day) were retained as predictors for the same outcome last year. Like the SAT-10 math model this year, a higher parent satisfaction total was a significantly positive predictor of EOC algebra 1 achievement in Grades 9–12, but it did not have any significant association with any outcomes last year. Not surprisingly, the number of suspensions was negatively associated with EOC algebra 1 outcome.

***Student outcome data disaggregated by different NCLB subgroups.***

A series of analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were conducted on the results of the SAT-10 for Grades 2–3 and the Benchmark Exams for Grades 4–8 to examine the academic progress of different subgroups of students. ANCOVAs were also carried out for Grade 9 because both pre and post SAT-10 scores were available for 9th-grade students during the 2008–2009 school year. Note that analyses were not conducted on Grade 1 this year because no pretest scores were available. In addition, data from students in Grades 10–12 were not analyzed because EOC exams are administered once a year and therefore do not have the requisite pretest scores needed for this analysis. The subgroups of students for which these analyses were conducted include the following:

- Racial/ethnic background,
- Gender,
- Special education status,
- Title I status, and
- Free/reduced-price lunch eligibility.

Tables 14–16 present a summary of the results of these analyses. The complete set of findings can be found in Appendix A.

**Table 14**

*Summary of ANCOVA Analyses of SAT-10 Language and Math Skills across Student Subgroups for Grades 2–3<sup>a</sup>*

Comparison Groups		Target Grade	SAT-10: Overall Language Skills	SAT-10: Overall Math Skills
Race/ethnicity	Black	2	<i>Significant difference</i>	No significant difference
	White			
	<i><b>Others</b></i>			
	Black	3	No significant difference	No significant difference
	White			
	Others			
Gender	Male	2	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Female			
	Male	3	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Female			
Title I status	<i><b>Non-Title I</b></i>	2	<i>Significant difference</i>	No significant difference
	Title I			
	<i><b>Non-Title I</b></i>	3	<i>Significant difference</i>	No significant difference
	Title I			
Education status	General education	2	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Special education			
	General education	3	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Special education			
Free/reduced lunch status	<i><b>Not free/reduced</b></i>	2	<i>Significant difference</i>	<i>Significant difference</i>
	Free/reduced			
	Not free/reduced	3	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Free/reduced			

*Note.* Findings are based on ANCOVA results. Higher achieving groups are presented in italicized bold type when a statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05 is observed.

<sup>a</sup> Pretest scores were not available for Grade 1, so the ANCOVAs could not be conducted for this grade.

Notably, Table 14 shows that most of the NCLB comparisons did not produce statistically significant results, suggesting less of a gap between NCLB subgroups in these grades than usually expected. The few instances where there were notable findings from the SAT-10 subgroup analyses include the following:

- With respect to poverty, non-Title I students significantly outperformed their counterparts in language in Grades 2 and 3. In addition, Grade 2 students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price lunches scored significantly higher than did those who were eligible for free/reduced-price lunches in both language and math.
- When looking at race/ethnicity, students other than White or Black in Grade 2 performed the best in language among all racial/ethnic groups.
- No statistically significant differences were found for gender or special/general education groups.

Table 15 shows that there were many more subgroup differences in Grades 4–8 than were evident at the lower elementary grades. These differences include the following:

- With respect to poverty, non-Title I students achieved significantly higher scores compared with Title I students in reading in Grade 8 and in both reading and math in Grade 6. In addition, students who were ineligible for free/reduced-price lunches significantly outperformed their counterparts in math in Grade 4 and in reading in Grades 5, 6, and 8.
- When looking at gender, girls achieved significantly higher reading scores than did boys in Grades 7 and 8.
- General education students in Grade 8 performed significantly better than did special education students in both reading and math.

With respect to racial/ethnic background:

- In Grades 4, White students achieved the highest scores in both reading and math among all racial/ethnic groups.
- Students other than White or Black performed the best among all racial/ethnic groups in reading in Grade 6 and in both reading and math in Grade 7.
- In Grade 8, White students achieved the highest reading scores among all racial/ethnic groups, whereas students other than White or Black achieved the highest math scores.

**Table 15**  
*Summary of ANCOVA Analyses of Benchmark Reading and Math Skills across Student Subgroups for Grades 4–8*

Comparison Groups		Target Grade	Benchmark: Overall Literacy Skills	Benchmark: Overall Math Skills
Race/ethnicity	Black	4	<i>Significant difference</i>	<i>Significant difference</i>
	<i>White</i>			
	Others			
	Black	5	No significant difference	No significant difference
	White			
	Others			
	Black	6	<i>Significant difference</i>	No significant difference
	White			
	<i>Others</i>			
	Black	7	<i>Significant difference</i>	<i>Significant difference</i>
	White			
	<i>Others</i>			
	Black	8	<i>Significant difference</i>	<i>Significant difference</i>
	<i>White</i>			
	<i>Others</i>			



Comparison Groups		Target Grade	Benchmark: Overall Literacy Skills	Benchmark: Overall Math Skills
Gender	Male	4	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Female			
	Male	5	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Female			
	Male	6	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Female			
	Male	7	<i>Significant difference</i>	No significant difference
	<i>Female</i>			
	Male	8	<i>Significant difference</i>	No significant difference
	<i>Female</i>			
Title I status	Non-Title I	4	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Title I			
	Non-Title I	5	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Title I			
	<i>Non-Title I</i>	<b>6</b>	<i>Significant difference</i>	<i>Significant difference</i>
	Title I			
	Non-Title I	7	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Title I			
	<i>Non-Title I</i>	<b>8</b>	<i>Significant difference</i>	No significant difference
	Title I			
Education status	General education	4	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Special education			
	General education	5	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Special education			
	General education	6	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Special education			
	General education	7	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Special education			
	<i>General education</i>	<b>8</b>	<i>Significant difference</i>	<i>Significant difference</i>
	Special education			
Free/reduced-price lunch status	<i>Not free/reduced</i>	<b>4</b>	No significant difference	<i>Significant difference</i>
	Free/reduced			
	<i>Not free/reduced</i>	5	<i>Significant difference</i>	No significant difference
	Free/reduced			
	<i>Not free/reduced</i>	6	<i>Significant difference</i>	No significant difference
	Free/reduced			
	Not free/reduced	7	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Free/reduced			
	<i>Not free/reduced</i>	<b>8</b>	<i>Significant difference</i>	No significant difference
	Free/reduced			

*Note.* Findings are based on ANCOVA results. Higher achieving groups are presented in italicized bold type when a statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05 is observed.

According to data reported in Table 16, although no statistically significant differences were found for gender, students in Grade 9 showed many subgroup differences in the SAT-10 outcomes for the remaining NCLB categories.

- Non-Title I students significantly outperformed their Title I counterparts in both language and math. In addition, students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price lunches achieved significantly higher language and math scores than did their lower-income peers.
- General education students had significantly higher achievement scores compared with special education students in both language and math.
- With respect to racial/ethnic background, White students achieved the highest language scores among all racial/ethnic groups, and students other than White or Black achieved the highest math scores.

**Table 16**  
*Summary of ANCOVA Analyses of SAT-10 Language and Math Skills across Student Subgroups for Grade 9*

Comparison Groups		Target Grade	SAT-10: Overall Language Skills	SAT-10: Overall Math Skills
Race/ethnicity	Black	9	<i>Significant difference</i>	<i>Significant difference</i>
	<i>White</i>			
	<i>Others</i>			
Gender	Male	9	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Female			
Title I status	<i>Non-Title I</i>	9	<i>Significant difference</i>	<i>Significant difference</i>
	Title I			
Education status	<i>General education</i>	9	<i>Significant difference</i>	<i>Significant difference</i>
	Special education			
Free/reduced-price lunch status	<i>Not free/reduced</i>	9	<i>Significant difference</i>	<i>Significant difference</i>
	Free/reduced			

*Note.* Findings are based on ANCOVA results. Higher achieving groups are presented in italicized bold type when a statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05 is observed.

#### IV. Conclusions/Recommendations

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that Arkansas public charter schools provided a viable educational alternative to the state's traditional public schools. At the time of the study, the public charter schools were implementing academic programs using a wide array

of instructional practices, providing professional development, engaging parents and the community, reporting on students' academic progress, and providing safe school environments.

An analysis of the various forms of data used in this study has led to the following conclusions:

- Parents and students were again very satisfied with the implementation of the public charter schools during the 2008–2009 school year.
- There was a greater focus on parent involvement and foreign language education in 2008–2009 compared to the previous year.
- Characteristics of the public charter schools, such as the use of multi-grade classrooms, theme-based curricula, team-teaching, higher attendance ratios, higher student and parent satisfaction, fewer suspensions, class-size reduction, and the absence of an extended school day were associated with improved student achievement in 2008–2009.
- NCLB comparisons indicated that fewer subgroup differences in reading and math achievement were observed in Grades 2–3 than in Grades 4–9.
- Budgetary issues at the public charter schools may be growing, because managing facility costs was even more challenging for open enrollment schools in 2008–2009 than in 2007–2008 and, on average, schools offered fewer designated professional development days in 2008–2009 than in 2007–2008.

Specifically, the study revealed a concerted effort by the public charter schools to increase parent involvement, especially at the open enrollment schools, which reported this as a challenge during the last evaluation period. In one example, 80 percent of open enrollment schools in 2008–2009 required parents to attend parents meetings, compared to 58 percent the previous year. Across all public charter schools, there was expanded implementation of parent involvement strategies over the course of the 2008–2009 school year; a notably higher percentage of schools implemented parent involvement contracts, established parent and community advisory meetings, used community resources (e.g., museums, parks, etc.) to enhance student learning, and created learning partnerships with community-based organizations, compared to 2007–2008. These efforts resulted in increased parent involvement according to the school administrators, 81 percent of whom rated it as *good/excellent* in 2008–2009, compared to 68 percent who did so the previous year.

Accordingly, parents seemed to respond positively to this effort, because a somewhat higher percentage of parents reported being *very satisfied* with their opportunities to be involved in their child's school in 2008–2009. Overall, parent satisfaction with their child's public charter school was again high in 2008–2009. Parents indicated feeling more satisfied with their child's current public charter school than their child's previous school, and a large percentage thought the quality of the math, reading, and writing instruction was better at the public charter school than the previous school. In an open-ended question, parents listed the most positive aspects of their child's public charter school to be the dedication of teachers and staff, a strong and engaging curriculum, small school and class sizes, opportunities for parental involvement, and positive academic outcomes. On the other hand, parents also listed their biggest concerns with the child's public charter school, which were most often issues with school facilities and equipment (i.e., lack of gyms, cafeterias, computers), the breadth of instructional and extracurricular offerings,

inexperience of teachers, and challenges in communication with the school regarding student progress and school events.

Facilities issues have been an ongoing challenge for public charter schools over the past 3 years, especially for open enrollment schools. In 2008–2009, the challenge was even greater than the previous year, as reported by the school administrators. The main issues and challenges faced by the schools were “facility costs,” which was indicated by 73 percent of open enrollment schools, compared to 50 percent the previous year. In addition, next year’s evaluation could examine the extent to which these budget constraints, in combination with the reduced numbers of dedicated teacher professional development days that occurred this past year, has impacted student instruction. Since the requirement to provide a minimum of 60 professional development hours still remains, future evaluations could delve further into how professional development opportunities are being carried out at the public charter schools and the effectiveness of these practices in comparison to dedicated professional development days, particularly given parents’ concerns over the inexperience of teachers.

The study also revealed growing attention to the needs of native-language development at the public charter schools. In 2008–2009, more than one quarter (27%) of the public charter schools (all were open enrollment schools) implemented a foreign language immersion program, compared to none the previous year. A closer look at the ethnic populations of the three public charter schools that implemented this program and were open before 2008–2009 (Benton County High School, Lisa Academy, and Dreamland Academy) shows the each experienced a notable growth in the percentage of Hispanic and Asian students at their schools from 2007–2008 to 2008–2009. It is evident that the public charter schools are beginning to address the foreign language needs of this expanding group of students.

Parent satisfaction and public charter schools’ innovative instructional practices are supported by evidence of increased student achievement at the schools. These successes can be linked back to the schools’ charter status, which has allowed them the flexibility to implement a wide array of practices that speak to each community’s educational needs. In 2008–2009, these included greater control over methods of instructional delivery, implementation of open board meetings, formal plans for family and community involvement, the hiring and dismissing of staff, targeted professional development, and performance-based bonuses for teachers.

As in 2007–2008, the differences in public charter school implementation may have resulted in higher student achievement in 2008–2009. In one piece of evidence linking parent choice to student achievement, when asked why they chose to enroll their child in a public charter school, parents again said that they were most interested in the school’s educational mission/philosophy and the school’s instructional program. The regression analyses demonstrate that their interests were warranted. In Grades 2–3, certain instructional practices, such as the use of theme-based curricula and multi-grade classrooms, were associated with increased student achievement. In Grades 4–8, class-size reduction was associated with improved student achievement on the benchmark literacy and math, and the non-use of extended day programs was associated with improved benchmark literacy scores. Finally, in Grades 9–12, the implementation of team-teaching and use of theme-based curricula were associated with higher achievement on the algebra EOC exam.

Customer satisfaction seemed to be well-linked to improved student achievement in 2008–2009. The regression analyses revealed that student satisfaction and attendance ratio were the most common variables that predicted improved student achievement in Grades 4–8 in literacy and math. Parent satisfaction also positively predicted student achievement on the SAT-10 math in Grades 2–3 and on the algebra EOC exam in Grades 9–12. The predictability of attendance to student achievement is consistent with the well-documented importance of school attendance on student achievement, but customer satisfaction has not positively predicted student achievement in the past three evaluations of the Arkansas Public Charter School Program.

Finally, comparative analyses of NCLB subgroups revealed trends in Grades 2–3 in the Title I category, where non-Title I students significantly outperformed Title I students. In 2008–2009, girls did not outperform boys as they did in 2007–2008. The most notable trends, however, were observed in Grades 4–8 and in Grade 9 in nearly all major areas: race/ethnicity, gender, Title I status, and free/reduced-price lunch status. Highlights of the findings in these areas include:

- “Other” ethnic students significantly outperformed both white and African American students in literacy in Grade 6, literacy and math in Grade 7, and math in Grade 8, and White students outperformed the other two groups in 4th-grade literacy and math;
- Females significantly outperformed males on the literacy exam in Grades 7 and 8;
- Non-Title 1 students significantly outperformed Title 1 students in literacy and math in Grade 6 and in literacy in Grade 7; and
- Non-free/reduced-price lunch students outperformed free/reduced-price lunch students in literacy in Grades 5, 6, and 8, and in math in Grade 4.
- In Grade 9, Non-Title I, General Education, and Non-Free/Reduced lunch students outperformed their counterparts (Title-I, Special Education, and Free/Reduced lunch, respectively) in both the SAT-10 language and math exams.
- Finally, in the area of race/ethnicity, White students outperformed Blacks and ‘Others’ in language and students of ‘Other’ ethnic backgrounds outperformed Whites and Blacks in math.

### ***Recommendations***

The following recommendations apply collectively to all public charter schools, as opposed to any specific school. It is hoped that these recommendations will provide the Arkansas public charter school program and its stakeholders with beneficial information to consider in their decision-making process as they move forward:

- ***Continue to encourage the use of innovative curricular instruction.*** Regression analyses indicated that using innovative instruction, such as theme-based instruction, team-teaching, and multi-grade classrooms, was positively associated with improved achievement at different grade levels. The ADE could continue supporting the public charter schools in conducting inquiries into the use of these methods and encourage the schools to implement them.

- ***Address facility cost challenges experienced by open enrollment public charter schools.***  
A greater percentage of public charter school administrators faced facility cost challenges in 2008–2009 than the previous school year. To address these concerns, the ADE could recommend to the legislature to explore modifications to the financial support that is provided to the public charter schools. The public charter schools could also be provided additional resources to purchase, lease, and/or renovate facilities by offering incentives to entities (e.g., districts, local businesses) that offer public charter schools the opportunity to either co-locate or lease appropriate facilities. Parents also echo these concerns; 24% of open enrollment school parents indicated feeling *dissatisfied* with the quality of the school facilities (e.g., library, gym, science labs, etc.) compared to only 11% of conversion school parents.
- ***Provide technical assistance opportunities.*** Starting a new school is a very difficult proposition, particularly when there may be limited resources available to support, guide, and assist public charter schools. As such, it is suggested that a collaborative partnership establish an infrastructure, perhaps with the help of local universities or community-based proponents of public charter schools, for assisting new and existing public charter schools in the following ways:
  - Serving the needs of students with educational disabilities or with limited proficiency in English (where needed);
  - Securing appropriate facilities;
  - Establishing policies and procedures;
  - Engaging in program development and grant writing;
  - Selecting/developing and implementing curricula;
  - Sharing successful and promising practices;
  - Hiring, developing, and retaining staff;
  - Establishing governance mechanisms; and
  - Conducting formative and summative program evaluations to drive program/school improvement.

# **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A:**  
**ANCOVA Analyses of Student Achievement**  
**Using NCLB Comparisons**

**Table 17**  
***SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grades 2–3***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE		Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 2</b> (N=241)	Black	38.23	11.84	2	5.186	0.006*
	White	50.07				
	Black	38.23	13.31	2	5.186	0.006*
	Others	51.54				
	White	50.07	1.47	2	5.186	0.006*
	Others	51.54				
<b>Grade 3</b> (N=281)	Black	31.53	14.15	2	1.865	0.157
	White	45.68				
	Black	31.53	7.47	2	1.865	0.157
	Others	39.00				
	White	45.68	6.68	2	1.865	0.157
	Others	39.00				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 18**  
***SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grades 2–3***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE		Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 2</b> (N=241)	Black	41.32	16.71	2	1.827	0.163
	White	58.03				
	Black	41.32	10.51	2	1.827	0.163
	Others	51.83				
	White	58.03	6.20	2	1.827	0.163
	Others	51.83				
<b>Grade 3</b> (N=281)	Black	44.13	15.60	2	2.370	0.095
	White	59.73				
	Black	44.13	13.53	2	2.370	0.095
	Others	57.66				
	White	59.73	2.07	2	2.370	0.095
	Others	57.66				



**Table 19*****Benchmark Reading ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grades 4–8***

		Test Administration and Mean Scale Score	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 4</b> (N=342)	Black	517.85	142.58	2	4.260	0.015*
	White	660.43				
	Black	517.85	1.15	2	4.260	0.015*
	Others	516.70				
	White	660.43	143.73	2	4.260	0.015*
	Others	516.70				
<b>Grade 5</b> (N=388)	Black	611.96	100.45	2	1.077	0.342
	White	712.41				
	Black	611.96	118.79	2	1.077	0.342
	Others	730.75				
	White	712.41	18.34	2	1.077	0.342
	Others	730.75				
<b>Grade 6</b> (N=602)	Black	623.35	141.53	2	5.727	0.003*
	White	764.88				
	Black	623.35	183.42	2	5.727	0.003*
	Others	806.77				
	White	764.88	41.89	2	5.727	0.003*
	Others	806.77				
<b>Grade 7</b> (N=682)	Black	686.32	52.40	2	18.506	0.000*
	White	738.72				
	Black	686.32	144.53	2	18.506	0.000*
	Others	830.85				
	White	738.72	92.13	2	18.506	0.000*
	Others	830.85				
<b>Grade 8</b> (N=632)	Black	711.07	116.28	2	12.373	0.000*
	White	827.35				
	Black	711.07	82.60	2	12.373	0.000*
	Others	793.67				
	White	827.35	33.68	2	12.373	0.000*
	Others	793.67				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 20*****Benchmark Math ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grades 4–8***

		Test Administration and Mean Scale Score	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 4</b> (N=342)	Black	545.93	92.64	2	13.344	0.000*
	White	638.57				
	Black	545.93	37.37	2	13.344	0.000*
	Others	583.30				
	White	638.57	55.27	2	13.344	0.000*
	Others	583.30				
<b>Grade 5</b> (N=388)	Black	598.33	63.92	2	1.619	0.199
	White	662.25				
	Black	598.33	80.09	2	1.619	0.199
	Others	678.42				
	White	662.25	16.17	2	1.619	0.199
	Others	678.42				
<b>Grade 6</b> (N=602)	Black	661.59	80.66	2	2.252	0.106
	White	742.25				
	Black	661.59	120.36	2	2.252	0.106
	Others	781.95				
	White	742.25	39.70	2	2.252	0.106
	Others	781.95				
<b>Grade 7</b> (N=682)	Black	686.32	52.40	2	5.423	0.005*
	White	738.72				
	Black	686.32	144.53	2	5.423	0.005*
	Others	830.85				
	White	738.72	92.13	2	5.423	0.005*
	Others	830.85				
<b>Grade 8</b> (N=632)	Black	682.81	75.02	2	8.684	0.000*
	White	757.83				
	Black	682.81	79.27	2	8.684	0.000*
	Others	762.08				
	White	757.83	4.25	2	8.684	0.000*
	Others	762.08				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 21*****SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grade 9***

		Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 9</b> (N=603)	Black	45.53	12.14	2	17.308	0.000*
	White	57.67				
	Black	45.53	8.87	2	17.308	0.000*
	Others	54.40				
	White	57.67	3.27	2	17.308	0.000*
	Others	54.40				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 22*****SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grade 9***

		Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 9</b> (N=603)	Black	55.82	10.33	2	5.585	0.004*
	White	66.15				
	Black	55.82	12.39	2	5.585	0.004*
	Others	68.21				
	White	66.15	2.06	2	5.585	0.004*
	Others	68.21				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 23*****SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grades 2–3***

		Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 2</b> (N=241)	Male	44.71	2.91	1	0.014	0.905
	Female	47.62				
<b>Grade 3</b> (N=281)	Male	39.22	3.22	1	0.584	0.445
	Female	42.44				

**Table 24*****SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grades 2–3***

		Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 2</b> (N=241)	Male	51.54	1.08	1	0.004	0.953
	Female	52.62				
<b>Grade 3</b> (N=281)	Male	55.86	2.70	1	0.007	0.932
	Female	53.16				

**Table 25*****Benchmark Reading ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grades 4-8***

		Test Administration and Mean Scale Score	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 4</b> (N=342)	Male	558.72	83.65	1	2.237	0.136
	Female	642.37				
<b>Grade 5</b> (N=388)	Male	632.05	79.05	1	0.748	0.388
	Female	711.10				
<b>Grade 6</b> (N=602)	Male	684.29	50.38	1	0.550	0.459
	Female	734.67				
<b>Grade 7</b> (N=682)	Male	711.00	5.73	1	19.143	0.000*
	Female	716.73				
<b>Grade 8</b> (N=632)	Male	721.51	63.10	1	26.974	0.000*
	Female	784.61				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 26*****Benchmark Math ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grades 4-8***

		Test Administration and Mean Scale Score	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 4</b> (N=342)	Male	601.46	3.93	1	0.912	0.340
	Female	605.39				
<b>Grade 5</b> (N=388)	Male	634.45	5.06	1	0.270	0.604
	Female	639.51				
<b>Grade 6</b> (N=602)	Male	701.74	19.76	1	3.505	0.062
	Female	721.50				
<b>Grade 7</b> (N=682)	Male	711.00	5.73	1	0.015	0.902
	Female	716.73				
<b>Grade 8</b> (N=632)	Male	713.46	0.04	1	2.114	0.146
	Female	713.42				

**Table 27*****SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grade 9***

		Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 9</b> (N=603)	Male	51.55	6.27	1	3.494	0.062
	Female	57.82				

**Table 28*****SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grade 9***

		Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 9</b>	Male	64.56	1.16	1	0.017	0.897
(N=603)	Female	63.40				

**Table 29*****SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Title-I Status, Grades 2–3***

		Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 2</b>	Title I	42.32	5.13	1	4.566	0.034*
(N=241)	Non-Title I	47.45				
<b>Grade 3</b>	Title I	37.90	3.83	1	4.994	0.026*
(N=281)	Non-Title I	41.73				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 30*****SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Title-I Status, Grades 2–3***

		Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 2</b>	Title I	48.71	4.49	1	0.691	0.407
(N=241)	Non-Title I	53.20				
<b>Grade 3</b>	Title I	49.09	7.23	1	3.128	0.078
(N=281)	Non-Title I	56.32				

**Table 31*****Benchmark Reading ANCOVA Results by Title-I Status, Grades 4–8***

		Test Administration and Mean Scale Score	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 4</b>	Title I	592.06	15.80	1	0.713	0.399
(N=342)	Non-Title I	607.86				
<b>Grade 5</b>	Title I	663.27	10.64	1	0.488	0.485
(N=388)	Non-Title I	673.91				
<b>Grade 6</b>	Title I	614.61	105.92	1	5.125	0.024*
(N=602)	Non-Title I	720.53				
<b>Grade 7</b>	Title I	686.61	46.03	1	0.001	0.981
(N=682)	Non-Title I	732.64				
<b>Grade 8</b>	Title I	718.71	65.54	1	14.717	0.000*
(N=632)	Non-Title I	784.25				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 32*****Benchmark Math ANCOVA Results by Title-I Status, Grades 4–8***

	Test Administration and Mean Scale Score	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 4</b> (N=342)	Title I Non-Title I	576.68 609.72	1	0.064	0.800
<b>Grade 5</b> (N=388)	Title I Non-Title I	656.44 634.31	1	3.325	0.069
<b>Grade 6</b> (N=602)	Title I Non-Title I	668.14 716.76	1	3.904	0.049*
<b>Grade 7</b> (N=682)	Title I Non-Title I	686.61 732.64	1	3.112	0.078
<b>Grade 8</b> (N=632)	Title I Non-Title I	700.66 722.97	1	0.004	0.947

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 33*****SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Title-I Status, Grade 9***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 9</b> (N=603)	Title I Non-Title I	49.65 55.20	1	7.984	0.005*

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 34*****SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Title-I Status, Grade 9***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 9</b> (N=603)	Title I Non-Title I	57.86 64.42	1	8.057	0.005*

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 35*****SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Special/General Education Status, Grades 2–3***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 2</b> (N=241)	Special Ed General Ed	34.95 46.86	1	0.829	0.364
<b>Grade 3</b> (N=281)	Special Ed General Ed	27.50 41.43	1	0.018	0.892

**Table 36*****SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Special/General Education Status, Grades 2–3***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE		Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 2</b> (N=241)	Special Ed	43.84	8.75	1	0.021	0.884
	General Ed	52.59				
<b>Grade 3</b> (N=281)	Special Ed	43.18	11.91	1	3.456	0.064
	General Ed	55.09				

**Table 37*****Benchmark Reading ANCOVA Results by Special/General Education Status, Grades 4–8***

	Test Administration and Mean Scale Score		Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 4</b> (N=342)	Special Ed	430.76	183.30	1	3.473	0.063
	General Ed	614.06				
<b>Grade 5</b> (N=388)	Special Ed	549.08	127.45	1	0.373	0.542
	General Ed	676.53				
<b>Grade 6</b> (N=602)	Special Ed	479.05	244.79	1	2.307	0.129
	General Ed	723.84				
<b>Grade 7</b> (N=682)	Special Ed	604.04	119.81	1	0.051	0.822
	General Ed	723.85				
<b>Grade 8</b> (N=632)	Special Ed	537.05	233.62	1	37.677	0.000*
	General Ed	770.67				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 38*****Benchmark Math ANCOVA Results by Special/General Education Status, Grades 4–8***

	Test Administration and Mean Scale Score		Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 4</b> (N=342)	Special Ed	536.18	70.98	1	0.391	0.532
	General Ed	607.16				
<b>Grade 5</b> (N=388)	Special Ed	593.42	45.02	1	0.436	0.509
	General Ed	638.44				
<b>Grade 6</b> (N=602)	Special Ed	597.16	121.71	1	0.754	0.385
	General Ed	718.87				
<b>Grade 7</b> (N=682)	Special Ed	604.04	119.81	1	2.392	0.122
	General Ed	723.85				
<b>Grade 8</b> (N=632)	Special Ed	597.05	124.04	1	7.032	0.008*
	General Ed	721.09				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 39*****SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Special/General Education Status, Grade 9***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 9</b>	Special Ed	24.88	1	33.284	0.000*
(N=603)	General Ed	56.26			

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 40*****SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Special/General Education Status, Grade 9***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 9</b>	Special Ed	44.91	1	9.145	0.003*
(N=603)	General Ed	64.88			

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 41*****SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grades 2–3***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 2</b>	Free/Reduced Lunch	39.15	1	9.295	0.003*
(N=241)	No Free/Reduced Lunch	51.97			
<b>Grade 3</b>	Free/Reduced Lunch	36.53	1	2.356	0.126
(N=281)	No Free/Reduced Lunch	44.11			

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 42*****SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grades 2–3***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 2</b>	Free/Reduced Lunch	42.86	1	4.272	0.040*
(N=241)	No Free/Reduced Lunch	59.70			
<b>Grade 3</b>	Free/Reduced Lunch	48.86	1	0.219	0.641
(N=281)	No Free/Reduced Lunch	58.97			

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 43*****Benchmark Reading ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grades 4–8***

	Test Administration and Mean Scale Score	Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 4</b>	Free/Reduced Lunch	554.27	1	2.030	0.155
(N=342)	No Free/Reduced Lunch	648.46			



	Test Administration and Mean Scale Score		Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 5</b> (N=388)	Free/Reduced Lunch	613.53	109.64	1	11.730	0.001*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	723.17				
<b>Grade 6</b> (N=602)	Free/Reduced Lunch	638.63	124.99	1	7.742	0.006*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	763.62				
<b>Grade 7</b> (N=682)	Free/Reduced Lunch	689.89	59.37	1	0.331	0.565
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	749.26				
<b>Grade 8</b> (N=632)	Free/Reduced Lunch	715.52	104.65	1	15.328	0.000*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	820.17				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 44**

***Benchmark Math ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grades 4–8***

	Test Administration and Mean Scale Score		Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 4</b> (N=342)	Free/Reduced Lunch	566.63	68.78	1	9.419	0.002*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	635.41				
<b>Grade 5</b> (N=388)	Free/Reduced Lunch	610.40	49.47	1	0.702	0.403
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	659.87				
<b>Grade 6</b> (N=602)	Free/Reduced Lunch	673.26	67.96	1	2.863	0.091
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	741.22				
<b>Grade 7</b> (N=682)	Free/Reduced Lunch	689.89	59.37	1	0.828	0.363
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	749.26				
<b>Grade 8</b> (N=632)	Free/Reduced Lunch	688.69	63.58	1	2.597	0.108
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	752.27				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 45**

***SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grade 9***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE		Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 9</b> (N=603)	Free/Reduced Lunch	47.48	12.88	1	15.328	0.000*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	60.36				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

**Table 46**

***SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grade 9***

	Test Administration and Mean NCE		Absolute Mean Difference	Numerator Df	F Value	Significance
<b>Grade 9</b> (N=603)	Free/Reduced Lunch	58.36	9.84	1	4.435	0.036*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	68.20				

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

## Appendix B: Survey Findings

### *Parent Survey Findings*

**Table 47**  
***Respondent Education Level***

Level	Total N	(%)
High school diploma	182	25.4
Associate's or 2-year degree	123	17.2
Bachelor's or 4-year degree	205	28.6
Graduate degree	128	17.9
Other	78	10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 48**  
***Previous School Attended by Child***

Previous Type of School	Type of School	Total N	Avg. (%)
Traditional public school	Open Enrollment	399	69.8
	Conversion	119	85.6
Private school	Open Enrollment	73	12.8
	Conversion	2	1.4
Home school	Open Enrollment	73	12.8
	Conversion	6	4.3
Another charter school	Open Enrollment	27	4.7
	Conversion	12	8.6

**Table 49**  
***Performance of Child at Previous School***

Total N	Excellent N (%)	Good N (%)	Average N (%)	Poor N (%)	Failing N (%)
735	318 (43.3)	215 (29.3)	142 (19.3)	48 (6.5)	12 (1.6)

**Table 50**  
***Performance of Child at Current School***

Total N	Excellent N (%)	Good N (%)	Average N (%)	Poor N (%)	Failing N (%)
739	410 (55.5)	251 (34.0)	62 (8.4)	14 (1.9)	2 (0.3)

**Table 51*****Quality Rating of Child's Previous School***

Total N	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
721	151	(20.9)	320	(44.4)	176	(24.4)	74	(10.3)

**Table 52*****Quality Rating of Child's Current School***

Total N	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
732	437	(59.7)	250	(34.2)	32	(4.4)	13	(1.8)

**Table 53*****Main Reasons Why Parents Choose Public Charter Schools***

Reason	Parent Survey (N = 750)	Administrator Survey (N = 23)
Interest in the charter school's education mission or philosophy	427 (56.9%)	16 (64.0%)
Child was doing poorly in previous school	113 (15.1%)	16 (64.0%)
Dissatisfaction with traditional public school options and/or safety	374 (49.9%)	16 (64.0%)
Interest in the charter school's instructional or academic program	488 (65.1%)	17 (68.0%)
More convenient location than previous school	104 (13.9%)	5 (20.0%)
Child has special needs that previous school was not addressing	78 (10.4%)	10 (40.0%)
Better teachers at this charter school	233 (31.1%)	10 (40.0%)
My child wanted to come to this charter school	168 (22.4%)	11 (44.0%)
This charter school offers extended day hours/before- and after-school program	137 (18.3%)	11 (44.0%)
Small size of this charter school or small classes	311 (41.5%)	16 (64.0%)
Greater opportunities for parental involvement at this charter school	182 (24.3%)	7 (28.0%)
It is the only school available for my child to attend/not applicable	50 (6.7%)	1 (4.0%)
Other primary reasons	125 (16.7%)	1 (4.0%)

**Table 54*****Quality of Current School Compared to Previous School***

Exemption	Total N	Much Better or Somewhat Better		About the Same		Much Worse or Somewhat Worse	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
The quality of school's reading instruction	718	516	(71.9)	166	(23.1)	36	(5.0)
The quality of school's math instruction	720	555	(77.1)	138	(19.2)	27	(3.8)
The quality of school's writing instruction	721	529	(73.4)	163	(22.6)	29	(4.0)
School safety	724	500	(69.1)	193	(26.7)	31	(4.3)
School facilities	724	460	(63.5)	174	(24.0)	90	(12.4)
Parent involvement or participation	722	484	(67.0)	209	(28.9)	29	(4.0)
Extra help or special services for students when needed	704	490	(69.6)	180	(25.6)	34	(4.8)

**Table 55*****Satisfaction with Specific Components of Child's Public Charter School***

Component	Total	Very/Somewhat Satisfied		Very/Somewhat Dissatisfied		Not Sure or N/A	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
Curriculum	736	688	(93.5)	22	(3.0)	26	(3.5)
Performance of the teachers	734	657	(89.5)	52	(7.1)	25	(3.4)
Class size	740	655	(88.5)	39	(5.3)	46	(6.2)
Individualized attention your child gets	738	651	(88.2)	58	(7.9)	29	(3.9)
Opportunities for parents to be involved or participate	739	669	(90.5)	41	(5.5)	29	(3.9)
Communication with your child's teacher	743	554	(74.6)	84	(11.3)	105	(14.1)
Quality of the building in which the school is located	737	480	(65.1)	127	(17.2)	130	(17.6)
Quality of the school facilities, such as the gym, library, and labs	743	658	(88.6)	45	(6.1)	40	(5.4)
Use of technology within the instructional program	742	624	(84.1)	59	(8.0)	59	(8.0)
School discipline policies and practices	743	613	(82.5)	58	(7.8)	72	(9.7)
Quality of student support services, such as guidance counseling and tutoring	736	524	(71.2)	121	(16.4)	91	(12.4)
Extracurricular activities	742	669	(90.2)	25	(3.4)	48	(6.5)
School size	738	634	(85.9)	42	(5.7)	62	(8.4)
School climate	736	688	(93.5)	22	(3.0)	26	(3.5)

**Table 56*****Satisfaction with Outcomes from Stated Concerns to School***

Component	Total	Very/Somewhat Satisfied		Very/Somewhat Dissatisfied		Not Sure or N/A	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
Outcome satisfaction	314	255	(81.2)	36	(11.5)	22	(7.0)

## Student Survey Findings

**Table 57**  
*Year in Current School*

Total N	One N (%)	Two N (%)	Three N (%)	Four or more N (%)
3,978	1013 (0.0)	1410 (35.4)	564 (14.2)	991 (24.9)

**Table 58**  
*Type of Previous School*

Total N	This Is My First School N (%)	Traditional Public School N (%)	Different Charter School N (%)	Home School N (%)	Private School N (%)
2,746	380 (13.8)	2097 (76.4)	166 (6.0)	103 (3.8)	231 (8.4)

**Table 59**  
*Student Self-Reported Interest in School Work*

Total N	Very N (%)	Somewhat N (%)	Just a Little N (%)	Not at All N (%)
2,975	865 (29.1)	1384 (46.5)	476 (16.0)	250 (8.4)

**Table 60**  
*Academic Success at Current School*

Total N	Excellent N (%)	Good N (%)	Average N (%)	Poor N (%)	Not Sure/NA N (%)
2,900	851 (29.3)	1229 (42.4)	678 (23.4)	142 (4.9)	73 (2.5)

**Table 61**  
*Rating of Previous School*

Total N	Excellent N (%)	Good N (%)	Average N (%)	Poor N (%)	This is my first school N (%)
2,514	554 (22.0)	840 (33.4)	752 (29.9)	368 (14.6)	429 (17.1)

**Table 62**  
*Rating of Current School*

Total N	Excellent N (%)	Good N (%)	Average N (%)	Poor N (%)
2,977	967 (32.5)	1130 (38.0)	599 (20.1)	281 (9.4)

**Table 63*****Number of Students in Classroom***

<b>Total N</b>	<b>Too Many Students in My Class N (%)</b>	<b>It Is about Right N (%)</b>
2,975	443 (14.9)	2532 (85.1)

**Table 64*****Frequency of Behavior Disruptions***

<b>Total N</b>	<b>Very Often N (%)</b>	<b>Often N (%)</b>	<b>Sometimes N (%)</b>	<b>Rarely N (%)</b>	<b>Never N (%)</b>
2,775	464 (16.7)	732 (26.4)	1093 (39.4)	486 (17.5)	196 (7.1)

**Table 65*****Frequency of Teachers Being Able to Help with Questions***

<b>Total N</b>	<b>Very Often N (%)</b>	<b>Often N (%)</b>	<b>Sometimes N (%)</b>	<b>Rarely N (%)</b>	<b>Never N (%)</b>
2,919	1022 (35.0)	1082 (37.1)	630 (21.6)	185 (6.3)	54 (1.8)

**Table 66*****Rating of Building Where School Is Located***

<b>Total N</b>	<b>Excellent N (%)</b>	<b>Very Good N (%)</b>	<b>Good N (%)</b>	<b>Fair N (%)</b>	<b>Poor N (%)</b>
2,985	690 (23.1)	1068 (35.8)	670 (22.4)	557 (18.7)	690 (23.1)

**Table 67*****Desire to Return to Current School Next Year***

<b>Total N</b>	<b>Yes, Definitely N (%)</b>	<b>Kind of N (%)</b>	<b>No N (%)</b>	<b>Graduating to Another School N (%)</b>
2,967	1051 (35.4)	848 (28.6)	548 (18.5)	520 (17.5)

## *Administrator Survey Findings<sup>6</sup>*

**Table 68**  
***Years at Current School***

<b>Years</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)</b>
First year	1	(4.0)
Two years	0	(0.0)
Three years	6	(24.0)
Four years	4	(16.0)
Five+ years	14	(56.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>(100.0)</b>

**Table 69**  
***Respondents' Level of Education***

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Bachelor's or 4-year degree	4	(16.0)
Master's degree	15	(60.0)
Doctoral or advanced degree	6	(24.0)
Other	4	(16.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>(100.0)</b>

**Table 70**  
***Public Charter School Waivers***

<b>Waiver</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)*</b>
Teacher certification requirements	18	(72.0)
Collective bargaining provisions	1	(4.0)
Establishing curriculum	9	(36.0)
Teacher hiring, discipline, and dismissal practices	1	(4.0)
Student discipline policies	1	(4.0)
Resource allocations	0	(0.0)
School calendar	13	(52.0)
School year length	2	(8.0)
School day length	12	(48.0)
Other	1	(4.0)

<sup>a</sup>Total percentage for each group does not equal 100% because respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

<sup>6</sup> Although 34 electronic surveys were received, only 25 are tabulated here. One survey from each 2008-09 charter school was selected with preference given to surveys with more responses, or surveys from higher-level administrative staff.

**Table 71*****Practices of Public Charter School Board in 2008–2009, Open Enrollment Schools Only***

Practices	Total N	Yes		No		Not Sure	
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Written description of board members roles and responsibilities	14	12	(85.7)	1	(7.1)	1	(7.1)
Identification of a board director	14	12	(85.7)	1	(7.1)	1	(7.1)
Clear procedures for the selection of board members	14	10	(71.4)	1	(7.1)	3	(21.4)
Formal orientation and training sessions for board members	14	11	(78.6)	2	(14.3)	1	(7.1)
Decision-making flow charts	14	4	(28.6)	7	(50.0)	3	(21.4)
Formal processes for developing school policy	14	11	(78.6)	1	(7.1)	2	(14.3)
Functioning executive committee	13	9	(69.2)	2	(15.4)	2	(15.4)
Open lines of communication	14	12	(85.7)	1	(7.1)	1	(7.1)
Implementation of open board meetings	14	12	(85.7)	0	(0.0)	2	(14.3)
Sharing of agendas and other important information before board meetings	14	12	(85.7)	1	(7.1)	1	(7.1)
Commitment to strategic planning	14	11	(78.6)	2	(14.3)	1	(7.1)
Clear, up-to-date by-laws	14	11	(78.6)	1	(7.1)	2	(14.3)
Formal plan for family and community involvement	14	12	(85.7)	1	(7.1)	1	(7.1)
Use of advisory committees	14	9	(64.3)	3	(21.4)	2	(14.3)
Responsibility of fund raising	14	8	(57.1)	5	(35.7)	1	(7.1)
Use of available funds for continued development	14	10	(71.4)	2	(14.3)	2	(14.3)

**Table 72*****Ethnicity of Public Charter School Staff, N=23***

Racial/Ethnic Background of Staff	Type of School	Weighted Avg. %
White	Open Enrollment	76.2
	Conversion	86.2
African American	Open Enrollment	19.8
	Conversion	12.2
Hispanic/Latino	Open Enrollment	3.0
	Conversion	1.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	Open Enrollment	0.7
	Conversion	0.0
Other	Open Enrollment	0.3
	Conversion	0.1



**Table 73**

***What Charter Status Allowed Schools to Do That Could Not Be Done in Traditional Structure, N=23***

Area	Number of Schools	(%) <sup>a</sup>
Higher teacher salaries	2	(8.7)
Private fundraising/grants development	2	(8.7)
Lack of tenure of teachers	4	(17.4)
Performance-based bonuses for teachers	7	(30.4)
Ongoing, targeted professional development	10	(43.5)
Rewards for teachers for exemplary performance	6	(26.1)
Dismissal of teachers for unsatisfactory performance	15	(65.2)
Contract for professional development services with non-district providers	5	(21.7)
Other charter status	2	(8.7)

<sup>a</sup>Total percentage does not equal 100% because respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses.

**Table 74**

***Number of Professional Development Days Offered, N=22***

Professional Development Days Offered	Type of School	N	(%)
1-9	Open Enrollment	0	(0.0)
	Conversion	1	(12.5)
10	Open Enrollment	8	(57.1)
	Conversion	4	(50.0)
11-15	Open Enrollment	2	(14.3)
	Conversion	2	(25.0)
16+	Open Enrollment	4	(28.6)
	Conversion	1	(12.5)

**Table 75**

***Administrator Rating of Parental/Community Involvement***

Type of Involvement	Total N	Poor/ Unsatisfactory		Avg.		Good		Excellent	
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Level of parental involvement at this school concerning students' academic achievement, attendance, and behavior	23	0	(0.0)	4	(17.4)	14	(60.9)	5	(21.7)
Level of parental involvement concerning participation in school-wide events or activities	23	2	(8.7)	3	(13.0)	10	(43.5)	8	(34.8)
Level of community involvement at this school	23	3	(13.0)	7	(30.4)	7	(30.4)	6	(26.1)

**Table 76*****Main Reasons Why Parents Choose Public Charter Schools***

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Parent Survey (N = 750)</b>	<b>Administrator Survey (N = 23)</b>
Interest in the charter school's education mission or philosophy	427 (56.9%)	16 (69.6%)
Child was doing poorly in previous school	113 (15.1%)	16 (69.6%)
Dissatisfaction with traditional public school options and/or safety	374 (49.9%)	16 (69.6%)
Interest in the charter school's instructional or academic program	488 (65.1%)	17 (73.9%)
More convenient location than previous school	104 (13.9%)	5 (21.7%)
Child has special needs that previous school was not addressing	78 (10.4%)	10 (43.5%)
Better teachers at this charter school	233 (31.1%)	10 (43.5%)
My child wanted to come to this charter school	168 (22.4%)	11 (47.8%)
This charter school offers extended day hours/before- and after-school program	137 (18.3%)	11 (47.8%)
Small size of this charter school or small classes	311 (41.5%)	16 (69.6%)
Greater opportunities for parental involvement at this charter school	182 (24.3%)	7 (30.4%)
It is the only school available for my child to attend/not applicable	50 (6.7%)	1 (4.3%)
Other primary reasons	125 (16.7%)	16 (69.6%)

**Table 77*****Strategies at School to Involve Parents or Community Members, N=23***

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)*</b>
Conducting parent workshops	12	(52.2)
Inviting parents to attend staff trainings	5	(21.7)
Using parents and community volunteers to provide special instruction	15	(65.2)
Using community sites for service learning or work-based learning opportunities	7	(30.4)
Using the school as a community center	5	(21.7)
Implementing parent involvement contracts	14	(60.9)
Implementing parent teacher conferences	21	(91.3)
Involving parents in discipline related discussions	20	(87.0)
Involving parents in monitoring students' academic progress	21	(91.3)
Scheduling school events to accommodate parents' schedules	19	(82.6)
Creating learning partnerships with community-based organizations	14	(60.9)
Using community resources to enhance students' learning	13	(56.5)
Establishing parent and community advisory committees	16	(69.6)
Hiring a parent involvement coordinator and/or community liaison	10	(43.5)
Other strategies	0	(0.0)

\*Total % does not equal 100% because respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses.

**Table 78*****Requirements of Parents, N=23***

Requirement	N	(%)*
Sign a contract with the school	14	(60.9)
Participate in a minimum number of hours at the school	6	(26.1)
Participate in a minimum number of activities	3	(13.0)
Participate on committees or the governance board	2	(8.7)
Attend parent meetings	16	(69.6)
Other requirements	14	(0.0)

\*Total % does not equal 100% because respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses.

**Table 79*****Primary Methods for Delivering Instruction, N=16***

Methods	N	(%)*
Interdisciplinary instruction	16	(69.6)
Team teaching	14	(60.9)
Project-based or hands-on learning	20	(87.0)
Regular integration of technology	19	(82.6)
Character education	17	(73.9)
Individualized/tailored instruction	16	(69.6)
Direct instruction	17	(73.9)
Foreign language immersion	7	(30.4)
Theme-based curriculum	6	(26.1)
Multigrade classrooms	5	(21.7)
School-to-work concepts and strategies	8	(34.8)
Regular integration of fine arts	7	(30.4)
Alternative or authentic assessing	10	(43.5)
Work-based or field-based learning	4	(17.4)
Cooperative learning	21	(91.3)
Reduced or small class size	13	(56.5)
Year round or extended schooling	7	(30.4)
Extended school day	12	(52.2)
Home-based learning with parent as primary instructor	2	(8.7)
Distance learning and/or instruction via Internet	6	(26.1)
Independent study	7	(30.4)
None	0	(0.0)
Other methods	0	(0.0)

\*Total % does not equal 100% because respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses.

**Table 80*****Instructional Hours Offered***

Total N	Traditional School Day and Year		Extended School Year, but Not Extended Day		Extended School Day, but Not Extended School Year		Extended School Day and Year	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
23	7	(30.4)	4	(17.4)	4	(17.4)	8	(34.8)

**Table 81*****Accommodations Available for Students with Special Needs***

Total N	Self-Contained Special Education		Pull-out Services		Inclusive Classrooms		None		Other	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
23	8	(34.8)	16	(69.6)	15	(65.2)	1	(4.3)	5	(21.7)

\*Total % does not equal 100% because respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses.

**Table 82*****Services Available for English Language Learner Students***

Total N	Self-Contained Bilingual Education		English as a Second Language Instruction		None		Other	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
23	0	(0.0)	12	(52.2)	6	(26.1)	4	(17.4)

**Table 83*****Assessment Strategies Used***

Strategies	N	(%)*
Teacher assigned grades	22	(95.7)
Student portfolios	12	(52.2)
Standardized achievement tests	20	(87.0)
State benchmark exams	21	(91.3)
State EOC exams	16	(69.6)
Student demonstrations or exhibitions	19	(82.6)
Student interviews or surveys	10	(43.5)
Behavioral indicators	15	(65.2)
Other performance-based tests	10	(43.5)
Other assessment	1	(4.3)

\*Total % does not equal 100% because respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses.

**Table 84*****Reported Issues/Challenges in Implementing the Public Charter School***

Area	Total N	Yes		No		Not Sure	
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Charter school organization	21	3	(14.3)	17	(81.0)	1	(4.8)
Charter school board of operations	21	3	(14.3)	16	(76.2)	2	(9.5)
General school administration	21	3	(14.3)	18	(85.7)	0	(0.0)
Fiscal and business management	21	5	(23.8)	16	(76.2)	0	(0.0)
Personnel	21	6	(28.6)	15	(71.4)	0	(0.0)
Managing public perceptions and public relations	21	10	(47.6)	11	(52.4)	0	(0.0)
Facility management	21	6	(28.6)	15	(71.4)	0	(0.0)
Selecting and implementing curricula	21	5	(23.8)	16	(76.2)	0	(0.0)
Increasing parent and community involvement	21	8	(38.1)	13	(61.9)	0	(0.0)
Designing/ delivering professional development	21	3	(14.3)	18	(85.7)	0	(0.0)
Facility costs	21	11	(52.4)	10	(47.6)	0	(0.0)
Other challenges	21	1	(4.8)	16	(76.2)	4	(19.0)

**Appendix C:**  
**Survey Instruments (Student, Parent, and Administrator)**

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**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION –2008-2009 CHARTER SCHOOL EVALUATION**  
**Student Survey**

**Directions:** Using a pencil or pen, please answer the following questions by completely filling in the circle next to your choice. We are interested in hearing what you thought of your previous school year, 2008-2009. After finishing, please insert your survey in the envelope your teacher has.

1. What grade are you in this year? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Including this year, how many years have you gone to this school?  
☐ 1 Year              ☐ 2 Years              ☐ 3 Years              ☐ 4 or More Years
3. Before coming to this school, where did you go to school?  
☐ This is my first school                              ☐ Was home schooled  
☐ Attended a regular public school              ☐ Attended a private school  
☐ Attended a *different* charter school
4. How interested were you in your schoolwork last year (2008-2009 school year)?  
☐ Very              ☐ Somewhat              ☐ Just a little              ☐ Not at all
5. How were your grades at this school last year (2008-2009)?  
☐ Excellent              ☐ Good              ☐ Average              ☐ Poor              ☐ Not Sure or I was not  
at this school last year
6. If you went to another school before this one, how would you rate your previous school?  
☐ Excellent              ☐ Good              ☐ Average              ☐ Poor              ☐ This is my first school
7. How would you rate this school?  
☐ Excellent              ☐ Good              ☐ Average              ☐ Poor
8. How did you feel about the number of students in your classes last year (2008-2009)?  
☐ Too many students are in my classes              ☐ It is about right
9. How often were there behavior disruptions in your classes last year (2008-2009)?  
☐ Very often              ☐ Often              ☐ Sometimes              ☐ Rarely              ☐ Never
10. Last year (2008-2009), how often were your teachers able to help you when you had a question?  
☐ Very often              ☐ Often              ☐ Sometimes              ☐ Rarely              ☐ Never
11. How would you rate the building where this school is located?  
☐ Excellent              ☐ Good              ☐ Average              ☐ Poor
12. Do you want to return to this school next year?  
☐ Yes, definitely              ☐ Kind of              ☐ No              ☐ Can't, graduating to another school level

**Thank you for completing this survey!**

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - CHARTER SCHOOL EVALUATION**  
**Parent Survey**

**Directions:** The Arkansas Department of Education is asking that you complete this survey as part of a study of the public charter schools during the **2008-2009 school year**. Your experiences with your child's charter school will be an important part of the study. Please know that the information you provide is confidential and that you will not be identified with any of your answers. Please complete and mail this survey using the postage paid envelope within two weeks of receiving it. If you wish to complete this survey online instead, please visit [www.surveymonkey.com/CharterParents09](http://www.surveymonkey.com/CharterParents09). Please complete only one survey per parent unless you have children enrolled in multiple charter schools.

**Background Information**

1. For how many years (including this year) have you had a child enrolled in Academic Center of Excellence? \_\_\_\_\_ Years
2. Where did your child attend school before enrolling in this charter school?
  - ☐ Regular/traditional public school
  - ☐ Private school
  - ☐ Home school
  - ☐ Another charter school
3. How many of your children were enrolled in this charter school last year (2008-2009)? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your highest educational degree?
  - ☐ High school diploma
  - ☐ Associate's or 2-year degree
  - ☐ Bachelor's or 4-year degree
  - ☐ Graduate degree
  - ☐ Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_
5. What were the main reasons for choosing this charter school for your child? (Check **all** that apply.)
  - ☐ Interest in the charter school's educational mission or philosophy
  - ☐ Child was doing poorly in his or her previous school
  - ☐ Dissatisfaction with traditional public school options and/or safety
  - ☐ Interest in the charter school's instructional or academic program
  - ☐ More convenient location than previous school
  - ☐ Child has special needs that the previous school was not addressing/meeting
  - ☐ Better teachers at this charter school
  - ☐ My child wanted to come to this charter school
  - ☐ This charter school offers extended day hours/before and after school programs
  - ☐ Small size of this charter school or small classes
  - ☐ Greater opportunities for parental involvement at this charter school
  - ☐ Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Not Applicable
6. How did your child do academically at his or her previous school?

<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Failing
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7. How is your child doing academically at this charter school in 2008-2009?

<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Failing
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### Charter School Satisfaction

8. How satisfied were you with specific features of this charter school during 2008-2009?

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Sure	Not Applicable
a. Curriculum (i.e., what the school teaches) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Performance of the teachers (i.e., how well the school teaches).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Class size .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. The individualized attention your child gets .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Opportunities for parents to be involved or participate .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Communication with your child's teacher .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Quality of the building in which the school is located.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Quality of the school facilities (i.e. school library, gymnasium, and science labs) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Use of technology within the instructional program .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. School discipline policies and practices.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Quality of student support services such as guidance counseling and tutoring.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Extracurricular activities (i.e., sports programs, after school clubs or activities) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. School size.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. School climate (i.e., the feel or tone of every day life at the school) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Did you express any concerns or issues to your child's school during the 2008-2009 school year?

☐ Yes

☐ No

- If yes, how satisfied were you with the outcome?

Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Sure	Not Applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. How would you compare this charter school with your child's prior school in terms of:

Much better      Somewhat better      About the same      Somewhat worse      Much worse

- a. The quality of school's reading instruction..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐
- b. The quality of school's math instruction..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐
- c. The quality of school's writing instruction ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐
- d. School safety ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐
- e. School facilities..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐
- f. Parent involvement or participation ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐
- g. Extra help or special services for students  
when needed..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐ ..... ☐

11. How would you rate the overall quality of your child's previous school?

☐ Excellent      ☐ Good      ☐ Fair      ☐ Poor

12. How would you rate the overall quality of this charter school?

☐ Excellent      ☐ Good      ☐ Fair      ☐ Poor

13. What have been the most positive aspects of your experiences with this charter school?

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14. What issues most concern you about this charter school?

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**Thank you for completing this survey.**



# Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009)

## 1. Arkansas Charter School Administrator Survey

Introduction: The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has asked Metis Associates, an independent research and evaluation firm, to conduct a study of Arkansas' Public Charter Schools for the 2008-2009 school year. The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of charter schools on student performance and the effects of innovative teaching and learning practices. Because your opinions are valuable, we are asking that you take about 30 minutes to complete this survey. All responses will remain anonymous and confidential. Responses to the items will be reported in the aggregate and never attributed to any one individual. The information you provide is greatly appreciated and will be used to improve future implementation of the program.

IMPORTANT: Since you cannot return to the survey once you have closed your browser, it must be completed in one sitting. Be certain to click the "SAVE AND COMPLETE THE SURVEY" button at the end of the survey before closing the survey window in order to ensure that your responses are saved.

### I. Background Information

\* 1. What is the name of your school?

  

\* 2. What is your position at this school?

- ☐ Principal/Director
- ☐ Assistant Principal/Director
- ☐ Other (please specify)

\* 3. Number of years at current position in this charter school (including current year):

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> This is my first year | <input type="radio"/> 3 years  |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 year                | <input type="radio"/> 4 years  |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 years               | <input type="radio"/> 5+ years |

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009)

\* 4. Number of overall years in this school (including current year):

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> This is my first year | <input type="radio"/> 3 years  |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 year                | <input type="radio"/> 4 years  |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 years               | <input type="radio"/> 5+ years |

\* 5. Type of charter school:

- ☐ District conversion
- ☐ New start/open-enrollment
- ☐ Virtual

\* 6. What is your highest educational degree?

- ☐ Bachelor's or 4-year degree
- ☐ Masters degree
- ☐ Doctoral or advanced degree
- ☐ Other (please specify)

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009)

2.

### II. Operations

\* 7. Please select the type of entity that best describes the group that manages your school.

☐ Educational Management Organization (for-profit service provider)

☐ Non-profit organization

☐ School district superintendent

☐ Chief Operating Officer of the charter

☐ Other (please specify):

\* 8. In what areas were there exemptions/waivers from the state and district education laws, regulations, and policies that were specified in the charter AND put into practice during the 2008-2009 school year?

☐ Teacher certification requirements

☐ Teacher hiring, discipline, and dismissal practices

☐ collective bargaining provisions

☐ Student discipline policies

☐ Establishing curriculum

☐ School calendar

☐ Purchasing procedures (e.g., outside bidding, more timely purchases)

☐ School year length

☐ Contractual services

☐ School day length

☐ Resource allocations

☐ Other (please specify)

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009)

\* 9. What arrangements were made for your schools facilities?

- ☐ Used district facility at no cost
- ☐ Used district facility at a reduced cost
- ☐ Rented/leased facilities from the district
- ☐ Rented/leased facilities that were independent of the district
- ☐ Purchased facilities
- ☐ Other (please specify)

10. Open Enrollment Schools only: Which of the following were regular practices of the charter school board during the 2008-2009 school year for this school?

	Yes	No	Don't know/ not sure
Written descriptions of board members roles and responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identification of a board director	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clear procedures for the selection of board members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal orientation and training sessions for Board members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decision-making flow charts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal processes for the development of school policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Functioning executive committee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Open lines of communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implementation of open Board meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing of agendas and other important information prior to Board meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commitment to strategic planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clear, up-to-date by-laws	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal plan for family and community involvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of advisory committees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responsibility of fund-raising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of available funds for continued board development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009)

3.

### III. Teachers

- \* 11. Please indicate the number of paid instructional staff that your school employed during 2008-2009, including both part-time and full-time staff?

Full-time

Part-time

12. Please give us an estimate of the percentage (%) of staff that fall into each racial/ethnic background category among your school's 2008-2009 paid instructional staff, including both full-time and part-time staff:

White

African American

Hispanic/Latino

Asian/Pacific Islander

Other

- \* 13. Among the full-time instructional staff, how many had full state certification for the subjects/areas they taught in your school during the 2008-2009 school year?

- \* 14. What has the charter status allowed you to do with respect to your instructional staff that you could not have done under the traditional school/district structure?(check all that apply)

☐

Higher teacher salaries (than public school)

☐

Ongoing, targeted professional development

☐

Private fund raising/grants development

☐

Reward teachers for exemplary performance

☐

Lack of tenure for teachers

☐

Dismiss teachers for unsatisfactory performance

☐

Performance-based bonuses for teachers

☐

Contract for PD services with non-district providers

☐

Other (please specify)

- \* 15. How many teacher professional development days did your charter school offer during the 2008-2009 year?

During the school year:

During the summer following:

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009)

4.

### IV. Students/Parents

\* 16. In your opinion, what are the primary reasons or factors why parents choose to enroll their children at your school (choose all that apply)?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interest in the charter school's educational mission or philosophy          | <input type="checkbox"/> Better teachers at this charter school  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child was doing poorly in his or her previous school                        | <input type="checkbox"/> My child wanted to come to this charter school  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dissatisfaction with traditional public school options and/or safety        | <input type="checkbox"/> This charter school offers extended day hours/before and after school programs  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interest in the charter school's instructional or academic program          | <input type="checkbox"/> Small size of this charter school or small classes  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More convenient location than previous school                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Greater opportunities for parental involvement at this charter school   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child has special needs that the previous school was not addressing/meeting | <input type="checkbox"/> It is the only school available for my child to attend (i.e., it is in your zone or no other elementary/middle/or HS in town) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)  |  |

\* 17. Which of the following factors can prevent new students from being admitted to your school?

- ☐ Space limitation or enrollment cap
- ☐ Residency outside of school or district boundaries
- ☐ Student ethnicity – charter school considers the racial/ethnic background of students in order to comply with desegregation orders
- ☐ Students' special needs because this school does not provide special education services
- ☐ Students' language abilities because this school does not provide English as a second language or bilingual instruction
- ☐ Evidence that parent/family can not fulfill involvement requirements
- ☐ Student and/or parent is not committed to school's philosophy
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify)

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009)

\* 18. Please rate the following questions:

	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
How would you rate the level of parental involvement at this school concerning students' academic achievement, attendance, and/or behavior?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How would you rate this school's level of parental involvement concerning participation in school-wide events or activities (e.g., Parents Club)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How would you rate the level of community involvement at this school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 19. Which of the following strategies used at this school involved parents or other members of the community during the 2008-2009 school year?  
(Check ALL that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conducting parent workshops   | <input type="checkbox"/> Involving parents in discipline-related discussions                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inviting parents to attend staff trainings                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Involving parents in monitoring students' academic progress                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using parents and community volunteers to provide special instruction           | <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling school events to accommodate parents' schedules                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using community sites for service learning or work-based learning opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Creating learning partnerships with community-based organizations                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using the school as a community center  | <input type="checkbox"/> Using community resources (e.g., museums, parks, gyms) to enhance students learning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Implementing parent involvement contracts                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Establish parent and community advisory committees                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Implementing parent-teacher conferences   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiring a parent involvement coordinator and/or community liaison                    |
| <br>   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)  |  |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 150px;"></div>                                 |  |



## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009)

\* 20. In 2008-2009, did your school require parents (or other adult family members of your students) to do any of the following? (check all that apply)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sign a contract with the school                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Participate on committees or the governance board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in a minimum number of hours at the school | <input type="checkbox"/> Attend parent meetings                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in a minimum number of activities          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)                                 |  |
| <input type="text"/>  |  |

\* 21. For parents who withdrew their child from your school after the 2008-2009 school year, what would you say were the main reasons why, besides moving to another District (choose all that apply)?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic performance of school   | <input type="checkbox"/> School size too large   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School structure   | <input type="checkbox"/> Class schedule  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unhappy with teachers or instruction   | <input type="checkbox"/> Length of school year   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unhappy with school leadership   | <input type="checkbox"/> Their child performed poorly at this school so they are trying a traditional school instead |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional choices (i.e., number of programs, extracurricular activities or electives available for students) | <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction was too rigorous for their child  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class-size   | <input type="checkbox"/> School safety   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School size too small  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)   |  |
| <input type="text"/>  |  |



## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009)

5.

### V. Educational Program

\* 22. Last year (2008-2009), what were the primary methods for delivering instruction to students at your charter school? (Check ALL that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interdiscipline instruction                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular integration of fine arts                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Team teaching                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative or authentic assessment                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Project-based or hands-on learning             | <input type="checkbox"/> Work-based or field based learning                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular integration of technology              | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative learning   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Character education                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced or small class size                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individualized or tailored instruction         | <input type="checkbox"/> Year-round or extended schooling                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct instruction                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Extended school day (before, after, summer, and/or vacation) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign language immersion                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Home-based learning with parent as primary instructor        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theme-based curriculum                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Distance-learning and/or instruction via Internet            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mutli-grade classrooms                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent study  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School-to-work concepts & strategies           | <input type="checkbox"/> None   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)<br><input type="text"/> |   |

\* 23. Does the design for this charter school include instructional hours that go beyond the typical school year (e.g., 180 days) or the typical school day (e.g., 6.5 hours)?

- ☐ Traditional school day and year
- ☐ Extended school year, but not extended school day
- ☐ Extended school day, but not extended school year
- ☐ Extended school day and year

\* 24. Does this school serve students with disabilities?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009)

25. If you answered "YES" to Q.24, what accommodations are available for students with special needs?

☐ Self-contained special education classes

☐ Pull-out services

☐ Inclusive classrooms

☐ None

☐ Other (please specify)

\* 26. How many of your students were identified as having limited English proficiency during the 2008-2009 year?

\* 27. What services are available for students with limited English proficiency?

☐ Self-contained bilingual education

☐ ESL instruction

☐ None

☐ Other (please specify)

\* 28. Which of the following student assessment strategies or methods were used at this school in 2008-2009?

☐ Teacher assigned grades

☐ Student portfolios

☐ Standardized achievement tests

☐ State benchmark exams

☐ State end-of-course exams

☐ Other (please specify)

☐ Student demonstrations or exhibitions

☐ Student interviews or surveys

☐ Behavioral indicators, such as attendance and suspension

☐ Other performance-based tests

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009)

6.

### VI. Wrap Up

- \* 29. There are issues and challenges which might be encountered when implementing a charter school. For each potential problem listed below, check yes if you believe it was an issue or challenge for this school, or no if it was not an issue or challenge for this school in 2008-2009.

	Yes	No	Not sure
charter school organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
charter school board operations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
general school administration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fiscal and business management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
personnel (e.g., retaining teachers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
managing public perceptions & public relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
facility management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
selecting and implementing curricula	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
increasing parent & community involvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
designing/delivering professional development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facility costs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>		

30. Are there any additional issues or concerns you would like to add about the Charter School Program that you think might help inform the evaluation?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!